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20th plenary meeting
Monday, 27 September 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Sir Michael Somare (Papua New Guinea): First of all, let me join other delegations in offering congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to the post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. With your guidance, Sir, my delegation is confident that we can discuss, in the spirit of cooperation, the different global challenges confronting us in order to further the common good of humankind.

We are meeting at a time when the world is going through some mixed developments. While, on some parts of the globe, countries are experiencing relative peace, in other parts they are embroiled in armed conflict. While some countries are enjoying economic growth and budget surpluses, others are experiencing economic stagnation or contraction.

The focus at this session of the General Assembly on reviewing the progress on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is most appropriate. The achievement of the eight cross-cutting Goals we set for ourselves would improve the quality of life of all of our peoples. Just last week, we concluded a stocktaking of the progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. While the results on the scorecard are mixed, the commitment of Member States to continuing to implement measures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is unequivocal.

Papua New Guinea, like many developing countries, has had measured success. As many noted last week, the global economic crisis has had an adverse bearing on the implementation of the MDGs. I would add, however, that had the resources promised in 2000 for implementing the MDGs been made available, the assessment sheet for many developing countries would have looked more positive. Papua New Guinea applauds the commitment of $40 billion for poverty alleviation, especially to improve the health of children and women. It is our hope that this will be a new resource envelope and not repackaged old commitments.

We have noted the calls for countries to take greater ownership of the implementation of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Papua New Guinea has accepted these challenges. We will continue to do

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all we can to meet the obligations we assumed when we joined others in 2000 to adopt the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2).

The Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations outlined in detail last week our country's efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Allow me to reiterate some of the main actions we are taking. Papua New Guinea has adapted and localized the MDGs by establishing 15 targets and 67 indicators within our medium-term development strategy for the period 2005 to 2010. We have calibrated our 2011-2015 medium-term development plan and designed our development strategic plan to achieve the MDGs. In addition, we have drafted our 2050 Vision Statement to be consistent with the Millennium Development Goals.

Our official development assistance programmes with our donor partners are being gradually realigned to enable Papua New Guinea to eventually meet its MDG targets. On a wider scale, we urge donor partners to abide by the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action. In the Pacific, we have adopted the Cairns Compact to better coordinate development assistance and to ensure effective delivery. Developed countries also need to raise their official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of their gross national income, in line with their commitments.

In line with our commitment towards MDG 3, my Government has submitted proposed legislation to the Papua New Guinea legislature to reserve 22 seats for women in the national Parliament. With respect to MDG 2, we have introduced a universal primary education policy and aim to achieve free primary-level education for all of our children by 2015.

Papua New Guinea is under no illusion that the achievement of the MDGs is a unilateral undertaking. This is a joint undertaking between developed and developing countries, just as it is a cooperative effort between the Government and civil society organizations. It is for this reason that my country is disappointed that MDG 8 on a global partnership for development appears to attract little serious interest from the developed countries. We note that the real value of aid has remained constant and that the Doha Development Round remains an unfinished affair.

Also of concern to us is the inability of many developing countries to enjoy equitable treatment from the Bretton Woods institutions. Our efforts to reduce deforestation in tropical rain forest countries, which I will touch on later, have met with the same apathetic response. Despite the best of efforts within the World Trade Organization and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum processes, the international trading environment continues to be characterized by inequalities. Often less visibly but still harmfully, global trade continues to be encumbered by trade protectionist measures.

In the area of international peace and security, the world, unfortunately, is no safer today than it was when the United Nations was established. War continues to be waged in Afghanistan. Iraq continues to suffer from regular suicide bombings. The Korean peninsula continues to be a flashpoint in the Asia region, and the Middle East continues to be a hotbed of tension.

Likewise, regional conflicts and ethnic tensions continue to erupt in many parts of Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. The international community needs to do more to address these conflicts, especially the Afghanistan and Iraq issues. The fragile peace and global security environment is further exemplified by the continued presence of Blue Helmets in many parts of world.

Papua New Guinea commends the efforts of United Nations peacekeeping forces, many of which have to operate in very trying circumstances. We wish to thank the troop-contributing countries for bearing this onerous responsibility on all our behalves. For our part, I am pleased to announce that my Government has enacted the International Obligations Bill to provide the legal framework for Papua New Guinea's participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Acts of terrorism continue and the threat of another terror attack on a scale similar to that of 9/11 remains real. The international community must continue to strengthen its cooperation to address this scourge.

Nuclear weapons continue to cause anxiety in our security considerations. While some may argue that nuclear weapons are the reason why the world has not fought another world war, my Government believes that these weapons of mass destruction are unnecessary and need to be eliminated. As part of that process, we support efforts to strengthen the mechanisms aimed at the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

As for other countries of the Pacific region, climate change is of great concern to Papua New Guinea. We need no scientist to tell us of the negative impact of climate change. We live it and we suffer from it. Many of our islands, such as the Carterets, and coastal habitats like my own home area of the Murik Lakes are being gradually submerged by rising sea levels. The result is that people living in these areas are becoming environmental refugees. Lowland diseases such as malaria are now occurring in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. Unusual weather patterns, such as increased incidences of cyclones, frequent heavy flooding and mudslides, are causing havoc in our economies and exacting untold suffering on our people.

All these attendant climate change challenges are taxing the budgetary resources of our countries and undermining our development plans. The international community has rightly recognized the insidious effects of climate change and agreed to take concerted action under the ambit of the Kyoto Protocol, the Bali Road Map and the Copenhagen Accord to address the issue.

Papua New Guinea urges our developed partners to shoulder greater responsibility for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for assisting developing countries, particularly small island States, to adapt to climate change and its effects.

Resources for adaptation and mitigation measures, particularly those committed in Copenhagen, must be made more readily available to developing countries. We note the initiative announced by Japan last week during the MDG review and look forward to further details of what it constitutes. We also applaud the financial commitments and policy initiatives that China announced to assist developing countries to implement the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As for Papua New Guinea, with our colleagues from the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, we have committed ourselves to a programme of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, more commonly known as REDD-plus. As this is the International Year of Biodiversity, let me say that the REDD-plus initiative will assure the protection of important biodiversity.

In addition, at the national level Papua New Guinea has adopted an action plan for climate-compatible development and established the Office of Climate Change and Development explicitly to oversee our actions on climate change issues. As part of our strategy to reduce our carbon footprint, we are now aggressively seeking to develop more hydropower and geothermal sources for our energy requirements. We have also embarked on a major commercialization exercise of our gas reserves to deliver a cleaner energy alternative to the world.

Many of us here have recognized the need to reform the United Nations in order to take account of the changed circumstances under which it operates, as well as the new and emerging challenges that it must address. We note and commend the Secretary-General for the ongoing administrative and institutional reforms he is undertaking to improve the efficiency of the United Nations in better serving Member States. We urge all stakeholders in the Security Council reform agenda to demonstrate courage and leadership so that the composition and workings of the Council can be reformed in ways that are equitable and reflect the current geopolitical and economic realities.

Papua New Guinea has previously stated at this Assembly that we believe that the expansion of the membership of the Security Council is logical to allow for representation from certain developed and developing countries. In that regard, I wish to reaffirm Papua New Guinea's support for Germany and Japan to be included as permanent members in an expanded Security Council.

Finally, the inequities that exist in the global trading system today are daunting, but they can be resolved. With genuine partnership, we can and shall overcome them. The world may not be any safer today than it was when the United Nations was established some 65 years ago, but having been able to avert another world war is ample testimony that the international community has the political will to address tensions and discord in a measured way. The United Nations and the international legal architecture that it has achieved, developed and promoted have played a significant role in that regard, thus underscoring the continuing relevance of this body.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea for the statement he has just made.

Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Batbold Sukhbaatar, Prime Minister of Mongolia

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Mongolia.

Mr. Batbold Sukhbaatar, Prime Minister of Mongolia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Batbold Sukhbaatar, Prime Minister of Mongolia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Sukhbaatar (Mongolia): This session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time when certain signs of recovery are being observed in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis, and come on the heels of sharp spikes in food and energy prices. Although the world is still grappling with the effects of those multiple and interrelated crises, the call of last week's summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for intensified collective action gives hope for optimism.

As the world plunged into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the best minds around the globe sought clear answers as to what went wrong and what needed to be rectified. Many argued that the economic theories referred to as neoliberalism or market fundamentalism, which have prevailed for the past quarter century, were flawed. Their main premise — based on the notion, for instance, that markets are self-correcting and that regulation is accordingly unnecessary — seems to have been proved wrong.

The experience of countries and regions that have achieved rapid growth and progress in poverty reduction has shown that the State can deliberately intervene in the economy and even correct market-based incentives in such a way as to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development. Hence, a new concept of development is emerging that envisions a reversal in the thinking on the roles of the State and the market.

As a generator of the new and innovative ideas and development notions that have changed the world in the past, the United Nations is, in our view, the right place to engage intimately in nurturing such fundamental concepts, which could have a huge impact on the development policies and prospects of its Member States. That could prove to be an important aspect of the deliberations that the President proposed as the theme for this debate — "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance".

It has been widely recognized that today's global challenges require global solutions. The underlying principles and characteristics of the United Nations make it an indispensable part of the evolving global governance system. The United Nations is the world's most universal, legitimate and authoritative organization and a political centre for global cooperation. It represents a unique forum for synthesizing solutions to global problems, ranging from nuclear weapons to climate change, and development to human rights. It is at the United Nations that we see world leaders commit themselves to making the world a safer, fairer, more prosperous and greener place to live for this and future generations.

Yet, it is a fact that there are challenges that have found or are seeking to find solution outside the United Nations. A legitimate question would be: why? There may be many factors at play and many facets to cover in finding an easy answer to that question. But what has emerged as obvious from our deliberations is the fact that, if the United Nations is to reaffirm its central role in global governance, it will have to be efficient and its reform vigorously pursued.

The revitalization of the General Assembly must be further pursued so that our deliberations and decisions have a more practical and meaningful impact on the lives of the people in whose name we act here. The role of the Economic and Social Council in global economic decision-making must be enhanced. The reform of the Security Council, aimed at making it more representative of the world's current reality, will certainly be a critical boost to reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance. Mongolia stands for a just and equitable enlargement of the Security Council by increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent seats and ensuring the fair representation of developing and developed countries alike.

Development, peace and security, and human rights are the three main pillars of the United Nations. Mongolia welcomes the revitalization of the United Nations development agenda, as attested by the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the

Millennium Development Goals last week and, most importantly, by the vibrant international debate in the lead-up to the summit. As a result, we are clearly in a much better place today as regards world leaders' commitment to intensifying the efforts towards the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

On our part, my Government recommitted itself, at the Summit, to the acceleration of our efforts towards poverty reduction, gender equality and environmental sustainability, the three MDGs where we are lagging behind. We have committed ourselves to a multisectoral, participatory and people-centred approach to the implementation of the MDGs, to improved governance as a foundation for successful development outcomes, and to better monitoring and evaluation of our work as we move forward.

As we intensify our poverty reduction efforts at home, we plan to focus more on issues of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a critical part of success. My Government is confident that the newly created UN Women will be an important partner in this endeavour. This year, Mongolia presented its national voluntary presentation on gender equality and the empowerment of women to the Economic and Social Council and will proceed to improve the legislative framework enabling women to realize more fully their economical and political potential, have better access to health services for themselves and their children, and participate more visibly in democratic governance.

Attending to the needs of the most vulnerable is at the core of the United Nations development agenda. As a landlocked developing country, Mongolia, along with other fellow Members, strives to advocate the interests of that group of countries. Despite the progress in implementing the priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action, the landlocked developing countries continue to be marginalized from international trade. They still experience higher costs of moving goods across borders, which puts their products at a competitive disadvantage and discourages foreign investment.

With a view to maximizing our coordinated efforts for the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and the MDGs through enhanced analytical capability and home-grown research on our specific needs, Mongolia initiated the establishment of the International Think Tank for the Landlocked Developing Countries. I am delighted to inform Member States today that the multilateral agreement for that institution was endorsed by the ministers for foreign affairs of the landlocked developing countries last week at their ninth annual meeting. I extend my Government's sincere appreciation to all stakeholders, including the Secretary-General, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and our fellow members for their unwavering support.

Climate change is another critical area for global governance. Building on progress achieved in Copenhagen in shaping a broad political consensus, it is imperative now to invigorate global negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in the lead-up to the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Cancún later this year.

The impact of climate change on Mongolia is undeniable. In less than 20 years, more than 70 per cent of our territory has been affected by desertification. Hundreds of rivers, springs and lakes have dried up, causing water shortages and biodiversity loss. Yet, climate change adaptation and mitigation techniques suitable for scaling up to meet the country's needs have yet to be fully identified and introduced. The strategies and programmes in place have failed to yield the desired results, and the emergence of mining as a major industry has only heightened concerns over the environment. The sustainable management of natural resources and addressing the country's ecological vulnerability will therefore need our sustained focus in the years ahead. Four issues — enforcement, dedication, financing and development cooperation — stand out as our priorities in addressing these challenges.

Last month, my Government held a special Cabinet meeting in the sands of the Gobi Desert. Desertification is an issue of vital concern to more than 1 billion people in over 100 countries. Continued land degradation, be it from climate change or unsustainable agriculture, is a serious threat to the food security and, ultimately, the human security of those affected. Through the message sent from Gobi, my Government expressed its firm resolve to effectively address desertification within the framework of the United

Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification.

In 2010, we have seen renewed international optimism with regard to the multilateral disarmament agenda. This shift in climate was reinforced by the new START agreement and the outcome of the Nuclear Security Summit, both of which were welcomed by my Government and reflected in the outcome of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Conference agreed on forward-looking action plans that impart much-needed momentum to the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Mongolia welcomes this outcome and is proud of the contribution it made towards nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation by declaring its territory to be nuclear-weapon-free. This status is fully recognized by the international community, as attested by the final document of the NPT Review Conference.

Mongolia welcomes the increasing role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in contributing to freedom from fear and freedom from want. The achievement of the MDGs will depend to some extent on the contribution of nuclear applications in such areas as nuclear energy, health care, and food and environmental security. Mongolia is expanding its cooperation with the Agency, especially in human resource development and nuclear applications in health and agriculture. Our 2009-2014 country programme framework, signed last year with the Agency, added the development of nuclear energy infrastructure and the country's uranium reserves as priority areas of cooperation.

This year, Mongolia has been designated one of the eight Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy model demonstration site countries. This will help Mongolia to most effectively address the increasing cancer epidemic and to share its experience with other developing countries. I would like, therefore, to take this opportunity to express my Government's gratitude to IAEA and its Director General for their valuable support.

Mongolia welcomes the second review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which, while emphasizing national implementation, stressed the importance of assisting Member States in this task. Mongolia takes seriously its responsibility to contribute to the global counter-terrorism endeavour and is party to all anti-terrorism instruments. Last May, we hosted, together with the United Nations, a subregional workshop on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We firmly believe in the vital importance of furthering development, democracy and respect for human rights in fighting terrorism and in building States' capacities to combat it.

Peacekeeping is an important tool for global governance in the hands of the United Nations. Since its inception, United Nations peacekeeping has contributed to preventing and managing violent conflicts and supporting nations in protecting and building peace in a post-conflict environment. Over the past decade, it has undertaken important reforms to make peacekeeping stronger, more effective and comparatively cost-efficient. Mongolia wishes to see more coherent interaction between the peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations.

Over the past decade, Mongolia has taken deliberate steps to enhance its participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Mongolia now participates in six United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operations — including the most challenging ones in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad and Darfur — and stands ready to further expand its participation.

In the recent past, Mongolia has been an active participant in international activities aimed at strengthening institutions and processes of democratic governance, protecting human rights and promoting democratic consolidation. The 1992 Constitution of Mongolia guarantees the Mongolian people fundamental freedoms and human rights. Mongolia is party to all major international human rights instruments. An independent National Human Rights Commission was set up, and a national human rights action programme adopted in 2003 is being implemented. The programme is a main policy document that aims at improving the capacity and accountability of the authorities; enhancing the participation of civil society, mass media and the private sector; and encouraging public motivation for strengthening human rights protections and combating human rights violations. All in all, our efforts can be summed up by affirming that political commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights, along with the setting of standards, is in place in Mongolia.

However, as has been rightly said, no human rights record is perfect. The implementation of human rights commitments in my country is hampered largely by two gaps, namely, a knowledge gap and a capacity gap. Furthermore, emerging transboundary threats, such as the spread of HIV and AIDS and other infectious diseases, human trafficking, migration and others, require an adequate collective response based on effective regional and international cooperation. Mongolia looks forward to constructive engagement with the Human Rights Council as it prepares to consider our national human rights report under the Universal Periodic Review in early November this year.

Direct civic engagement is essential to any type of governance, at both the national and the international levels. My Government endeavours to actively engage civil society and communities in policy development and implementation. We have a partnership agreement with civil society and, through our open Government website, citizens relay their views and comments to assist in drafting policy papers and laws prior to their consideration by the Cabinet.

Over the past two months, I have travelled extensively across the country to see first hand the development challenges being faced in the countryside and to hear views at the grass-roots level. This kind of direct interaction is essential to identifying people's immediate and long-term needs alike and to reflecting their concerns in the Government's activities. Earlier this year, through the Mongolia Economic Forum, we also had an extensive discussion on economic and development issues with businesses, civil society and media to set our priorities for the years ahead.

The President returned to the Chair.

To have people employed, educated and healthy — in other words, human development — is at the heart of the policies and activities of my Government. Towards this end, my Government is pursuing policies to accelerate inclusive economic growth through wide-scale industrialization and by undertaking mega-projects in mining and infrastructure development. National wealth will be distributed to each and every citizen of Mongolia through a newly established human development fund in the form of regular allowances, as well as through health care, education and housing benefits.

Mongolia has the honour and privilege to assume the chairmanship of the Community of Democracies next year, and looks forward to a strong collaboration with fellow members and other global stakeholders. In conclusion, may I reiterate Mongolia's strong commitment to and support for the United Nations — a strong, inclusive and open United Nations as the guarantor of global governance.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mongolia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Batbold Sukhbaatar, Prime Minister of Mongolia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Winston Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Winston Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Winston Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda): Let me at the outset commend you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I pledge my delegation's support for your efforts to successfully move forward the agenda of this session. I also wish to commend your predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, for his stewardship, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership of the Secretariat.

Your choice of theme for our general debate — "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" — is both appropriate and timely. After 65 years of operations, there is sufficient history to provide material for objective review and enough future to justify such a rigorous assessment.

In my own view, arising from the many successes of the United Nations in a wide range of areas, one of the most enduring lessons the past 65 years have taught us as a global community is the wisdom and supremacy of multilateralism. Even where multilateralism has failed to secure lasting solutions to some of the world's problems, it has laid unshakable foundations on which bilateral understanding can be built.

The resolution of the conflict in the Middle East, for example, has long eluded the international community. This is why we are hopeful with regard to the latest efforts at peaceful negotiations between Israel and Palestine being brokered by the current United States Administration. If there is to be lasting peace in the Middle East, there must be two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. There must be direct negotiations with both parties, Israel and Palestine, at the same table. Israel must heed the international community's unanimous call to extend the moratorium on disputed settlements, which would contribute positively to the negotiations. And all the countries of that region must commit to and work towards a lasting and durable Middle East peace.

Today, global governance relates not only to concerns about peace, security and political self-determination. Importantly, global governance embraces such imperatives as the elimination of hunger, disease and ignorance; administering a stable and robust international financial system; and ensuring fair trade, adequate shelter and the preservation of our very delicate environment.

Never in the history of human existence has our planet been faced with a greater urgency to meet these objectives. The scale of poverty, conflicts, global warming, the economic and financial crisis, migration, pandemics, terrorism and international crime demands a collective global effort employing common and coordinated strategies. The extent of these problems and the enormity of their consequences are clearly beyond the resource and management capabilities of any one nation.

I believe that our United Nations, with its near universal membership, is the only global body that has the legitimacy and operational structures to undertake the task of forging the necessary political and economic consensus to effectively tackle these problems.

A mere three years ago, we heads of Government described climate change as the defining challenge of our era. Three years on it remains so, especially for those countries that are particularly vulnerable. And yet we hear from some who have a responsibility to act that they will only do so when others have taken action. While everybody waits for somebody else to act, the peoples of the world are made to suffer.

If ever a challenge requires an urgent global solution, this one does. Small island developing States such as Antigua and Barbuda face a unique set of vulnerabilities related to our small size: relative isolation, narrow resource base and high exposure to global environmental threats. To compound this, over the last five years we have suffered disproportionately from the financial, food and energy crises. Our economies have been battered and many of our productive sectors wiped out.

But the hardship that has ensued for our people from all this, will pale into insignificance, if the international community does not quickly address the looming threat of climate change, which is already having a devastating impact all over the world. We, the small island developing States, have already experienced loss of agricultural land and infrastructure — so too have many countries in Africa.

Our fishing and tourism industries are being impacted negatively. There has been considerable loss of our biodiversity, saltwater intrusion and devastation of terrestrial and wetland habitats and the destruction of human settlements. Even the once-distant threat of rising sea-level is now a reality, forcing some of our people to emigrate and rebuild their lives elsewhere.

The most notable action, so far, has been repeated promises of abundant financing to address the most urgent problems. Sadly, most of these remain just that: promises. There are too many commitments to undertake aggressive greenhouse gas emissions reductions with the caveat of "only if others do so as well". This approach has created a dangerous stalemate that can only be to the further detriment of small island developing States, such as my own.

Not willing to allow this dangerous situation to continue forever, my own country of Antigua and Barbuda has pledged to reduce its already minuscule greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020.

This is within the range specified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has recommended that overall reductions should be within the range of 25 per cent to 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020. We have also declared that we will work towards making Antigua and Barbuda a green economy by 2020.

However, much remains to be done, and we are painfully aware that we cannot do it alone. I therefore call on all countries, both developed and developing, to join us in this endeavour by announcing real, meaningful emission reductions targets, so that we can move this seemingly endless debate forward and reach a comprehensive, binding agreement in the very near future.

The year 2010 has not been without its share of catastrophes. The year began with a devastating earthquake in Haiti — one of the worst disasters in history. The death toll has been put at some 220,000 out of a population of around 9 million. The earthquake has been estimated to cost $8 to $14 billion, according to the Inter-American Development Bank. Against this backdrop, many countries pledged assistance — up to $1.5 billion. Sadly, only 10 per cent of the amount pledged has been received by Haiti. In the midst of these unfulfilled commitments, the humanitarian needs of our sister island remain dire.

Since charity begins at home, we, the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), of which Haiti is a member, have been contributing within our very limited capacity our fair share of assistance to Haiti, including direct budgetary support. I call on those nations that pledged assistance to Haiti, to honour their commitments. Those pledges are needed urgently, now that the rebuilding phase is getting under way in that devastated country.

In Chile, a huge earthquake moved the city of Concepción at least 10 feet, or 3 metres, to the west. Between 500 and 700 persons were killed. Total recovery costs could exceed $15 billion. In the People's Republic of China, a series of snowstorms and freezing weather have affected the western region of the country since December 2009. The storms have affected millions and resulted in 30 deaths. This year alone, severe flooding and a major earthquake killed hundreds of people and rendered thousands more homeless.

In Pakistan, devastating floods have resulted in over 1,600 deaths and more than 6 million people have been affected. That country has sought international assistance to cope with the catastrophe. Despite mass evacuations, there are fears that the death toll will rise as flooding reaches the southern parts of the country and the risk of an outbreak of waterborne diseases increases in many areas. These disasters and their aftermaths serve to reaffirm the need to ensure that addressing the humanitarian consequences of today's disasters and emergencies remains a United Nations priority. And those countries in a position to do so should pledge their support to assist Pakistan and to honour their pledges.

Antigua and Barbuda continues to commiserate with the Governments and people of these and other nations, who have been affected by natural and other disasters.

In my region of Latin America and the Caribbean, our Governments are taking bold steps to overcome some of our inherent economic and social vulnerabilities by forging economic partnerships designed to help lift our people out of poverty. The Single Market and Economy being developed at the level of the 15-member Caribbean Community is one such valiant initiative.

At the subregional level of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), economic integration is proceeding at an even more rapid pace with our commitment to creating an economic union by next year.

Both the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, as well as the OECS Economic Union, are enormous undertakings by small island nations with very limited resources. We therefore invite the support of our development partners to assist us with the technical and financial resources necessary to move these economic initiatives forward. The leaders of our region see the building of strong economic alliances as being vital to the creation of wealth and prosperity for our people.

We are convinced that the capacity of our national Governments to deliver critical social services for our populations can be improved through greater economic and technical cooperation at the regional level. It is for that reason, and with the interest of our people in mind, that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean agreed at our meeting in Mexico earlier

this year to create the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, which will unite members of the Rio Group and the Caribbean Community. This Community of nations will coexist with the Organization of American States, in which we participate along with our North American partners.

The economic challenges facing all the people of our hemisphere are too many and their implications too great for us to contemplate the creation of any economic community of Latin America and the Caribbean that excludes any one country of our region. It is in that spirit that Cuba remains, and will always remain, a vibrant participant in any broad economic arrangement for Latin America and the Caribbean.

We may not all share similar political views and political systems. However, the right of all the people of Latin America and the Caribbean to an equal chance at survival, economic development and social advancement is absolute and non-negotiable. For that reason, the Governments and the people of Latin America and the Caribbean continue to regard as unjust, counterproductive and reprehensible the maintenance of the ongoing economic embargo against Cuba. As a political strategy or economic manoeuvre, that act of economic strangulation is unjustifiable. We condemn the embargo in the strongest possible terms, as its continued enforcement by the United States severely hampers the development of Cuba and its people.

Antigua and Barbuda therefore reiterates its call for the United States to immediately end its economic embargo against the Cuban people.

More than 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, democracy has emerged as the preferred form of government all over the world. And people everywhere have strongly opposed attempts to seize Governments — any Government — through undemocratic means. Such attempts, whenever and wherever they occur, must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. We therefore condemn the undemocratic moves such as the recent coup d'état in Honduras and call for the unconditional return of former President Zelaya without harm to his physical person. That is a sine qua non for the full normalization of relations between Honduras and most of the countries of the region.

As I said in my statement during the review of the Millennium Development Goals (see A/65/PV.8), a renewed emphasis on trade is a critical pillar on which developing countries are seeking to rescue their battered economies and lift their people out of poverty. In that respect, it is essential that all participants in the global trading system, including our partners in the developed countries, adhere to their international obligations. If that is not done, the people of our small developing countries, despite the encouragement of their leaders, will have no faith in the international system. They will have no reason to believe that the multilateral system is just and that it works for them in the same way it does for large, powerful, developed nations.

The non-resolution of the ongoing gaming matter within the World Trade Organization (WTO), despite repeated rulings in favour of Antigua and Barbuda by the Dispute Settlement Body of WTO, is a case in point. Let us not forget that, like the United Nations, WTO and other bodies such as the Bretton Woods institutions are essential elements of the multilateral system and vital pillars of the accepted architecture of global governance. In the spirit of preserving that vital architecture of global governance, Antigua and Barbuda reiterates its call for our friend and partner, the United States, to work with us to quickly resolve the situation and reach a settlement that is fair and just to both parties.

Trade is a critical engine of economic growth. If for no other reason but that, we must complete the Doha Round of trade negotiations so as to ensure a balanced outcome. Now more than ever, after some 10 years in the making, Doha must lead to economic expansion, development in the poorest countries, and an end to distorting subsidies and protectionist barriers.

A number of the countries classified as middle- and upper-middle-income countries are in dire need of substantial amounts of debt relief in order to create fiscal space for spending targeted towards their development. Many of those countries now have debt-servicing obligations that are comparable in size to their gross national product or, in some cases, dwarf the value of their total output. For them — my own country included — the need for urgent debt relief is a top priority.

For many of those countries the debt distress has been caused by global crises not of their making. The global financial and economic tsunami, the likes of which has not been seen since 1929, has impacted negatively on every sphere of life for about 90 per cent

of humankind. In some instances, entire national economies collapsed and commercial and private sectors have been decimated. For some, the downward spiral has no end in sight. Many countries are struggling to maintain a minimal level of normalcy. For others, attempting to stave off financial collapse, the social upheaval and chaos are unravelling the very fabric of modern societies and jeopardizing sanity, sovereignty, independence, and the dignity and pride of their people.

The effects of the global financial and economic crisis on the larger territories of the Caribbean Community are evident in their economic, fiscal and social statistical data. For the smaller territories of the Eastern Caribbean, the situation is even more devastating. Permit me to relate the facts pertaining to my own country, Antigua and Barbuda.

In addition to the direct and indirect impact that the global economic contagion has had on our economy, we have had to endure the collapse of two of the leading insurance companies, which not only held normal policies but also annuities and life savings for individuals, as well as large cash investments for national statutory corporations totalling approximately $150 million. At the same time, the leading private-sector employer and second largest employer in the nation after the Government has collapsed.

All that was added to a financial sector that has been suffering from a sustained campaign by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to reduce competition in taxation, an area into which we had diversified our economy, which was previously dependent almost entirely on tourism. That action by OECD resulted in the loss of hundreds of the most lucrative jobs and an estimated loss of hundreds of millions in direct revenue to our economy.

We note the recent removal of Antigua and Barbuda from the so-called Grey List. Our current listing among the countries that have substantially implemented internationally agreed taxation standards is a belated recognition of the steps taken by the current Government of Antigua and Barbuda, over several years, to be in full compliance with all international standards in this respect.

In the light of those realities of substantial revenue decline and severe economic dislocation, Antigua and Barbuda recently engaged the Paris Club in discussions on our country's $133 million outstanding debt to that group of creditors. Our engagement with the Paris Club was assisted by a stand-by arrangement previously approved by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). We have reached an agreement by which some 90 per cent of that debt will be restructured. Our next step will be to enter bilateral negotiations with Paris Club member creditors.

With the economic challenges I have outlined, our efforts to meet human development needs are severely strained and challenged in unprecedented ways. That makes our attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, though possible, extremely difficult without a more realistic and flexible direct commitment from our development partners. I therefore call on the Group of Seven, the Group of 20, IMF and the World Bank, in their bilateral and multilateral commitments to the Caribbean, to give a more compassionate and favourable response to the New Arrangement to Borrow, with specific focus on the Group of 20 agreement of 2 April 2010. That agreement was to triple the fund's lending capacity to $750 billion. This approach has already been taken with some other regions and nations. The institutions are being called on, too, to accord to our region consideration of broader and more comprehensive debt cancellation to spur economic revival and, in some cases, survival.

The General Assembly meets once again as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. We meet in this unique forum, which bestows equality on each of its 192 Members, in order to engage in multilateral discussions to advance the interests of all peoples of the world. But reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance cannot be done without due regard to the myriad challenges facing all its Members.

For us to achieve that reaffirmation — which most, if not all, of us believe is a very notable objective — I believe we must act now. I therefore call on the Assembly to develop at this session the modalities that will enable our nations to be able to resolve conflicts and promote peace and stability, foster a more prosperous world through balanced growth and prosperity among developed and developing countries, encourage all Member States to pursue a cleaner, greener, more sustainable world for our children, and create a safer world, free of nuclear weapons.

The 65-year history of this noble institution establishes beyond a doubt that we can. And the future of our generation and generations of our peoples to come behoves us to embark on that mission with urgency and immediacy.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Winston Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Jaume Bartumeu Cassany, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra.

Mr. Jaume Bartumeu Cassany, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jaume Bartumeu Cassany, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Bartumeu Cassany (Andorra) (*spoke in Catalan; Spanish and French texts provided by the delegation*): It is certainly a great opportunity for the Principality of Andorra and the Government I represent to address the Assembly. The United Nations is the forum that, true to its origins, today represents the greatest source of hope for many people, countries and Governments.

In Andorra, we are aware of what being a small Member country of the United Nations involves — that is, a determination to engage in cooperation, hard work and honest efforts. The world is the sum of our possibilities and our efforts, and of the aspirations of each of us.

The world in the twenty-first century is neither better nor worse; it has the same defects, contrasts and virtues as in earlier centuries, but the rules of play are more dynamic. Thanks to new technology and social networks, citizens now have greater weight than in earlier times in alerting and motivating the political and economic leaders and seeing that they remain active.

Despite all that, today we live in a world of patent contrasts, where hunger continues to be one of our worst evils. More than a billion people suffer from malnutrition and poverty. The consequences of the food, environmental and economic crises have compounded the situation of the most vulnerable populations.

During the World Summit on Food Security in Rome last November, we decided to adopt measures to halve by 2015 the number of people suffering from malnutrition and hunger, combining all possible efforts to achieve the first of the Millennium Development Goals. In the Group of 20 (G20) meeting in Toronto, the Secretary-General defended the position of the most vulnerable populations and asked the 20 leading world Powers to develop new policies for combating poverty.

The struggle to combat climate change, however, is still unresolved. The natural disasters that the people of Haiti and Pakistan have had to deal with show how devastating the effects of climate change can be. It is a phenomenon that jeopardizes the poorest populations, affects access to water, compounds malnutrition and leads to violence. The economic impact on developing States is terrible.

While the threats are real, the solutions are real too. The possibility of dealing with them exists. During the Copenhagen Conference, the States parties to the Climate Change Convention initiated negotiations for an agreement. We hope that at the Conference on Climate Change to be held in Cancún in December, an effective and scientifically ambitious text will be adopted that will make it possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Andorra is engaging in activities aimed at combating climate change, particularly water treatment and reduction of substances that deplete the ozone layer. In the next few months our Government also plans to approve ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

It is clear is that the current crisis is forcing us to rethink the structures of the global financial system to make it more equitable, more ethical and at the same time more sound, in order to ensure that world leaders'

aspirations can — little by little, but more each time — converge and agree on what the most vulnerable peoples, countries and democracies truly need.

Andorra has succeeded in moving off the Grey List of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), thanks to the signing, between September 2009 and February 2010, of 17 bilateral agreements on the exchange of tax information. Our firm commitment to the recommendations of OECD and the international community as a whole, as expressed at the G20 meetings, has laid the foundations for our business structure and boosted confidence in Andorra's financial sector.

We wish to move forward on the road to transparency and international cooperation in combating tax fraud. We therefore believe that a permanent European mechanism for financial stability should be established, as well as very strict regulation of the products known as derivatives. It would also be desirable to create a European agency to rate the solvency of the financial activities and of its administrations.

We also wish to continue to work, from a perspective of respect, in an Organization such as the United Nations, reformed and consolidated, able to help the international community to move forward at this stage of its history, avoiding any exacerbation of the inequalities that fuel violence and hatred.

We therefore need to promote an international definition of minimum social guarantees for all mankind. Andorra firmly believes that the United Nations can ensure the necessary equilibrium, respect for all States — regardless of their economic, political or military power — and the application of international law. The United Nations Charter urges Member States to apply tolerance and to combine their efforts to maintain international peace and security — in short, to ensure that the aspirations and needs of all coincide.

In the last 65 years, the United Nations has taken many actions to promote disarmament, development and the rule of law and democratic practices, and it continues to do so. The Organization and its Member States have been supported by non-governmental organizations and grass-roots movements, which have worked to ensure that the tragic experiences of the twentieth century are not repeated.

One of the features of my country is that we have no army. For more than 700 years Andorra has lived in peace, without a single armed conflict. Today, determined to show our international commitment to disarmament, Andorra intends very soon to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Let us remember that the founding principles of our Organization are equality, the defence of human rights and the prohibition of any form of discrimination.

The Human Rights Council is the principal forum for the discussion of the defence of human rights. Thanks to the Universal Periodic Review, all Member States are subject to a unique exercise in dialogue, which encourages us to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. This process is proving to be effective, but there are still a number of challenges to overcome. Andorra will undergo this review for the first time in the coming month of November.

To mark the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Andorran civil society and, in particular, the Andorra National Committee for UNICEF have carried out many activities jointly with Andorran institutions to raise awareness of that text and educate the population on the importance of defending the rights of the child.

Combating violence against women is one of the priorities of the Government that I represent. On 14 April this year, we created the Secretariat for Equality and Welfare, with the objective of coordinating the range of actions aimed at promoting the status of women and establishing new policies in the area of gender. This year, we are celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth Conference on Women, held in Beijing.

During the March 2010 session of the Commission on the Status of Women, we recognized that women have an essential role to play in promoting broad and sustainable socio-economic development. Progress has been made on improving the status of women, but, unfortunately, it is not enough. We must continue promoting the rights of women and fighting domestic violence.

According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the most profitable illegal activity in Europe is human

trafficking. Eighty-four per cent of the victims of human trafficking in Europe have been enslaved for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It is important to focus on that issue from the perspective of protecting victims, which will certainly be integrated into the development of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted on 30 July 2010 (resolution 64/293).

Over the coming months, Andorra will ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which is a compelling demonstration of our State's international commitment to this fight and of our will to support international instruments aimed at protecting human rights and preserving the fundamental values of our democratic societies.

The Government that I represent commends the recent decision by the United Nations to create the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). I wish this new body the greatest success; it can count on the full support of my country, and we will work in solidarity with Michelle Bachelet.

At present, we are all experiencing a profound global economic crisis, which threatens the European model of society. This crisis is also cultural and affects values such as solidarity.

As we celebrate 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, we have the opportunity to remember the relevance of cultural diversity. Learning about others, tolerance and respect for human rights and human dignity are the ingredients needed to build a harmonious and peaceful society.

Perhaps as a result of the small size of Andorra, or of its geographical surroundings — abrupt and extremely beautiful — in the Pyrenees, we have been able to develop natural and strong human relationships, through which our attachment, commitment or disagreement with all people is shown sincerely, without filters and without doublespeak. Therefore, when large-scale natural disasters, humanitarian crises or international emergencies occur, Andorra responds, and it does so sincerely, with voluntary contributions commensurate with international norms and additional contributions when called for by the situation. Andorra, in accordance with its national budget, is always present and always does its part. Based on this solidarity, we support and promote international development cooperation, and our country has a number of non-governmental organizations that devote vigorous efforts to working in this area.

The challenges we are forced to face are numerous. We have the good fortune of being able to work together in order to overcome them. It is indeed a great responsibility, but it is also a great opportunity. It is an opportunity to come up with solutions that meet the needs of those worst off.

In conclusion, I should like to wish you, Sir, the best of luck and the greatest of success over the coming year. I am convinced that you will make great progress towards improving the individual and collective impact of our Organization.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jaume Bartumeu Cassany, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu.

Mr. Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Natapei (Vanuatu): Vanuatu is very pleased that we are meeting under your presidency, Sir, and, on behalf of my Government and of the Pacific Islands Forum, I extend my warm congratulations to you, and we wish to assure you of our full confidence and cooperation.

I should also like to take a moment to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for his exceptional service and leadership during the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly and for the considerable and important achievements of that session.

In the same spirit, I take this opportunity also to commend the Secretary-General for his vision, leadership and tireless efforts in working towards achievements in the common interest of all humanity.

Many innocent lives continue to be wasted, with good people killed or wounded and multitudes displaced by heinous acts designed to undermine and destabilize the collective efforts of the international community to achieve peace and security for our societies. These many unprecedented events continue to test the very foundation of our Organization.

As we prepare to enter the second decade of this twenty-first century, it is vital now more than ever that our membership affirms its confidence and faith in the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It is important that we continue to assert our support for fundamental human rights and the peaceful coexistence of our nations. The range and urgency of the challenges that now confront the international community in our globalized and interdependent world demand, at the very least, our steadfast support for and commitment to peace and security for our communities and peoples, and for future generations.

If we are to effectively guarantee human rights and achieve peace and security and social and economic justice for all, we need to be united in this endeavour, and our cooperation and multilateral joint efforts need to be durable and effective. My Government and people of Vanuatu are steadfast in our belief that the United Nations remains uniquely suited to the pursuit and coordination of global initiatives to attain these objectives.

Vanuatu hosted the forty-first annual Pacific Islands Forum in our capital, Port Vila, last month. As current Chair, I wish to inform the Assembly that the Pacific Islands leaders again noted that transnational crime remains a threat to national and regional stability, in particular the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and illicit drugs. Consequently, the Pacific Islands Forum has strengthened cooperation in counter-terrorism measures and emphasized national efforts and regional cooperation in combating transnational organized crime and in strengthening border control capacities. The Pacific Islands Forum remains committed to collective arrangements and mechanisms to assist regional Governments recovering from national conflicts and crises. The value of those efforts is evident in the positive results of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, created under the Biketawa Declaration with the assistance of contributing member States, which would not have been successful without the strong leadership and commitment of the Solomon Islands Government.

While many of our member countries have not ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), Forum leaders recognize the important role that the Convention offers in providing an internationally agreed framework for effective anti-corruption activities around the world. I am pleased to say that our regional organizations are working with the various United Nations agencies to advance work to promote the Convention.

While known as a region characterized by oceanic isolation, smallness and general vulnerability, the Pacific region is one of only a few in the world to have experienced nuclear weapons testing. Therefore, advancing the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty — also known as the Treaty of Rarotonga — remains critical and relevant to our signatory member States. The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty reflects our region's deep commitment not only to international peace and security but also to collective international action to ensure peace and security. In endorsing the successful outcome of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, Forum leaders also welcomed the announcement by the United States of America of its intention to ratify all protocols of the Treaty of Rarotonga.

Notwithstanding their size, national obligations and circumstances, our respective Forum members value and are proud of their contributions to United Nations peacekeeping efforts. My own country is proud to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping missions in East Timor, Haiti, the Sudan, Bosnia, the Peace Monitoring Group and the Bougainville Transition Team in Bougainville, and to the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.

Terrorism is an offence to humanity and contrary to the core values of the United Nations. We must be resolute in our national and collective efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms. For my own country, I reaffirm our strong support for the relevant Security Council resolutions against terrorism. Those resolutions provide a clear signal of our determination

to suppress terrorist activities, including training, international movement and financing.

All of us present here today have described the various stages of our progress to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For our island countries, our increasing vulnerability to threats and challenges, underscored by the impacts of the global economic, financial, fuel and food crises, is exacerbated by the current and impending impacts of climate change, as well as our inherent limited capacity to respond. This is not to say, however, that we have not made progress in achieving any of those goals. With respect to Goal 2, the primary education systems of the Pacific region are characterized by high enrolment, with six of our countries currently displaying net enrolment ratios of over 90 per cent. Most, if not all, of our Pacific island countries are expected to meet the goal of gender equality in education by 2015. We have been able to achieve those goals because we have localized the global indicators by adjusting them to suit our local circumstances and priorities.

While we remain concerned about the pace of our progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, we are committed to accelerating progress towards achieving them by 2015. The Port Vila Declaration on Accelerating Progress on the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which was adopted by Pacific Forum leaders at their meeting in Vanuatu last month, recognizes that the MDGs are extremely important, as is also the incremental path towards achieving those Goals — a path that should recognize and accommodate the special circumstances and challenges we face in the Pacific. The Port Vila Declaration also highlights the importance of mainstreaming the programme of support for the sustainable development of small island developing States — which is captured in the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action — as an accelerator for achieving the MDGs in the Pacific and addressing the specific vulnerabilities that we face. To ensure the success of the Port Vila Declaration, we call for the support, collaborative action and commitment of the international community and our development partners — particularly an improved understanding of and ability to address our vulnerabilities and for improved coordination of efforts towards achieving the MDGs.

Advancing the Pacific islands' work with respect to the Millennium Development Goals is closely and inextricably linked to the Mauritius Strategy. The development and endorsement of the Pacific Plan by the Forum leaders in 2005 underscored the critical need for creating stronger and deeper linkages between our countries and for identifying sectors where the region could gain the most by sharing resources in the area of governance and by aligning policies. While we believe that we have made some excellent progress in effectively implementing the Mauritius Strategy at the national and regional levels, we also acknowledge our shortcomings, some of which are beyond our control. The growing vulnerabilities of our Pacific island countries are exacerbated by the impacts of the global economic crisis, climate change and natural disasters, and those factors affect our abilities to respond.

Climate change remains the greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific. Continuing and concerted efforts by Forum members are being made at the national, regional and international levels to address the impacts of climate change on Pacific communities and peoples. The degree of urgency for real commitments to emissions reduction must be commensurate with the science and with the associated impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable communities. This issue must not be viewed with an eye to short-term impacts on traditional industrial growth or political tenure, but rather with a longer-term consideration of the sustainability of economies, societies and peoples the world over. A meaningful, legally binding agreement on emissions reduction must be reached urgently and without delay. Recognizing the importance of effective coordination and implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts at all levels — and particularly at the national level — Forum leaders have endorsed a set of principles that will guide Forum island countries and development partners in this regard, bearing in mind existing and ongoing efforts in the region. Those principles are consistent with the Cairns Compact and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change, and they reflect recognition by Forum leaders of the important role that regional and international arrangements play in supporting national adaptation and mitigation through the enhancement of capacity and access to resources.

I am also pleased to say that, ahead of the Cancún climate change meetings this November and December, the Government of Kiribati will be hosting the Tarawa Climate Change Conference in November. We anticipate bringing together representatives of countries vulnerable to the impact of climate change, as well as representatives of major economies.

Allow me at this juncture to make a few remarks pertinent to Vanuatu's position on a number of issues. We are meeting here at this Assembly session to once again renew our commitment to the United Nations and to the principles enshrined in its Charter. However, the need to reform the United Nations to ensure that it effectively responds to the needs of its Members remains imperative.

In that regard, I wish to commend the Secretary-General for advancing the work on the reform of the Security Council. We note the work done by the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. So we join all like-minded States in encouraging the United Nations to pursue equitable reforms in its institutions in order to minimize the democratic deficit in the multilateral arena.

My Government also joins all other heads of Governments that are Members of the United Nations family in congratulating the Secretary-General on bringing to a reality the efforts over four years to create the office of UN Women, a new entity formally established by the General Assembly within the United Nations created in July of this year. That decision gives more prominence to women and their place in our society.

Vanuatu celebrated 30 years of political freedom last July. This year marks the end of the Second International Decade of Decolonization. My Government wishes to question the progress on some important processes of self-determination. It is disturbing to think that we may legitimize practices that contravene the very principles on which this Organization has been founded. Are we to assume that decolonization issues may be ignored in the years to come so as not to unsettle the status quo?

Issues relating to decolonization and severe human rights violations must be effectively and impartially addressed. We call upon the United Nations to strengthen its efforts in working towards full decolonization of Territories that are still under the control of administrating Powers. Where there are serious reports of human rights violations, there must be a stronger United Nations role in investigating all allegations of human atrocity. We are reminded that the noble task of our multilateral Organization is to reaffirm our commitment to and respect for fundamental human rights and the dignity of the human person.

We are encouraged to see emerging nations, such as Kosovo, rising from the turmoil of restraint to take up their position in the midst of the independent nations of the world. It is in the spirit of democratic freedom that justice must prevail for those peoples whose right to political freedom continues to be suppressed by colonial and illegitimate administrating Powers. That includes for those countries whose political freedom to claim their rights to territorial sovereignty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and those whose political freedom to rightfully claim an extended continental shelf under the Convention are suppressed by colonial administrative rule.

As we applaud calls for a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, my country also calls for the lifting of the embargo on Cuba, which will enable the good people of Cuba to improve their lives.

My country, together with other least developed countries in the Pacific, has consistently argued in this forum that the mechanisms and criteria for assessing graduation eligibility must not be isolated from the permanent and inherent vulnerabilities of our countries. It is unrealistic for United Nations agencies to look at the progress and make projections without taking into consideration the issues of permanent vulnerabilities and capacity to sustain growth in our countries. Indicators for most Millennium Development Goals clearly demonstrate little progress in human development. Climate change, volcanic eruptions and other disasters will continue to be significant factors inhibiting human development in our islands. Such factors are critical, and we therefore reiterate our position that they must be carefully weighed in the vulnerability graduation criteria.

In the case of our very close neighbour, Fiji, my Government believes that all players are interested in

seeing positive political progress there, which must continue to genuinely engage the good people of Fiji. We have learned that multilateralism offers some constructive innovations in diplomatic practice, but it may also complicate conflict resolution by increasing tension between actors.

Finally, in the spirit of reconciliation through the Pacific way, I call upon all international and regional diplomatic actors to assist in ways that will not polarize the region. Instead, our diplomatic approaches should help to give genuine dialogue and engagement a more credible opportunity. There should be genuine and renewed commitment to fostering relations in the Pacific region, commitment that promotes greater freedom, regional cooperation, friendship and integration, as envisaged in the Pacific Plan document.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all our development partners for the support that they are providing in building our economies. I believe more can be done to assist the Pacific island countries in addressing the growing challenges confronting the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Information and Legal Affairs of Grenada

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Information and Legal Affairs of Grenada.

Mr. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Information and Legal Affairs of Grenada, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Information and Legal Affairs of Grenada, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Thomas (Grenada): I am honoured to address this body. I do so at a time when the world continues to face multiple challenges, foremost of which for small island developing States such as Grenada is the fragile economic, financial and ecological situation. But despite those difficult circumstances, the people of Grenada demonstrate tremendous resilience. Resourcefulness, patience and abiding faith in God keep us going forward. We will therefore not relent. Our resolve is firm. Dedication, creativity, renewed commitment to our fellow beings, unwavering commitment to multilateralism and, most of all, solidarity will help us survive these trying times.

Indeed, as it did in the past, this body can again prove to be the perfect partner in our quest to solve our problems, if only we commit ourselves to cooperate more with each other. Carefully targeted technical and other forms of assistance to countries most in need would make a vast difference in the lives of millions.

It is in that spirit that I join the many speakers who preceded me in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to guide the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. You have Grenada's full support.

We commend the outgoing President, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for his dedication and able handling of the Assembly's work in the year just ended and wish him the very best for the future. In addition, Grenada recognizes the tireless stewardship and leadership of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as the United Nations tackles the very complex array of global issues.

In her July address to the United Nations, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, head of the Commonwealth of Nations, concluded her remarks with customary clarity and insightfulness, affirming that the United Nations is a real force for common good (see A/64/PV.105). Grenada supports that statement.

At the very inception of the Organization, 65 years ago, its objectives were to avoid future wars and maintain the peace, and to partner with developing countries in their social and economic development. Grenada is satisfied that after more than six decades of existence, those goals remain worthy of continuing pursuit.

In times of conflict, strife, natural disasters and other humanitarian matters, the United Nations has

been the first place to turn to. Its relevance, role and involvement in global affairs remain unquestionable. Any weakening of its authority and effectiveness cannot be in our best interests. The United Nations must remain the premier organization for global diplomacy and negotiations. We must do nothing to hinder the United Nations continuing as a real force for good in the world. Indeed, the United Nations must lead, not follow, in global governance.

Times have changed. The world is facing new realities, and the United Nations must adjust accordingly. For that reason, the recent advances made in United Nations system-wide coherence deserve special commendation. The formation of the new body, UN Women, aimed principally at promoting the rights of women and girls and equality between the sexes, is an early success of United Nations reform and is embraced by Grenada. Our desire to actively participate in the fulfilment of the noble objectives of UN Women has led us to seek membership on its Executive Board. I am hopeful that Grenada's candidacy will receive strong support and be elected.

Similarly, the United Nations must recognize the inherent imperatives of democracy. Continued failure to meaningfully reform the Security Council will deny that body the political legitimacy it needs to maintain and indeed enhance its leadership role. Grenada joins with the Caribbean Community and calls for a Security Council seat for small island States as soon as possible.

Climate change is rightly described as one of the most urgent issues facing humanity and must remain at the top of the global diplomatic and negotiating agenda. Left unchecked, its potential consequences could be catastrophic, particularly for small island developing States. Recent studies confirm that over the past five decades the planet has heated up and that 93 per cent of this warming has occurred in the oceans. The consequential rise in sea level is already affecting low-lying countries in the Caribbean and beyond and is undermining small economies, ruining their societies and threatening their very existence.

In that connection, we continue to call for ambitious mitigation targets and to welcome climate financing. Fast-start funding in the amount of $30 billion, announced in 2009 and intended to assist developing countries, especially the most climate-vulnerable nations, has reached only a small percentage of developing countries, and just a fraction of promised funds has been released. Clearly, that situation has to be corrected, for financial assistance must be commensurate with the scale of the threat faced and should be sustained, especially for small island developing States.

Grenada welcomes the empanelling of the Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing and the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability. We anticipate that in their reports the matter of appropriate and sustainable levels of climate-change financing will be properly addressed and promoted.

What an important review year 2010 is. We applaud the High-level Plenary Meeting on biodiversity (see A/65/PV.7 and PV.10) and support the call to halt species loss. We welcome the convening of the High-level Review Meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5) (see A/65/PV.13 and PV.18). In its capacity as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States, Grenada was privileged to play a coordinating role in that important review process, and we thank all, including our development partners and the United Nations, for undertaking the process with us. Now that this body has endorsed the political declaration, we call for quick and full implementation of the MSI+5 decisions.

Similarly, Grenada welcomes the Millennium Development Goals and remains firm in its determination to achieve them. Our report submitted in the just-concluded review process indicated that while Grenada has made progress, there is much more to be done to achieve the established Goals within the five years that remain.

It is our view that if our countries are to eliminate poverty and realize their true potential, there must be a comprehensive review of the criteria for determining middle-income status. Many countries placed in that category, including Grenada, are highly indebted and deserve special attention in order to achieve sustainable development. Small island developing States cannot attain their full potential if they are prematurely set adrift in the development ocean with a false diagnosis of full preparedness. No matter what its growth pattern or level, a country with 37 per cent poverty and debt-to-GDP ratio of over 100 per cent —

as is the case with Grenada — cannot be ready to sail the high seas of development financing autonomy. That day will come, but it is not yet here.

Grenada registers its strong support for the call for a United Nations high-level meeting on non-communicable diseases — NCDs. Currently, NCDs constitute the main cause of morbidity and mortality in our region. Life expectancy depends to a great extent on the avoidance of such illnesses, and thus preventative policies must be aimed at promoting changes in lifestyles. Therefore, we view with a great degree of satisfaction the progress made by our Caribbean representatives here at the United Nations in articulating the need for such a meeting in 2011. I pledge Grenada's participation at the highest level.

Grenada has confidence in the United Nations and in the work it can do. We unreservedly support the pursuit of international peace and security, the rule of law, the promotion of democracy and human rights, the fight against terrorism, the fight against the illicit drug trade and the many other issues that threaten our world.

We also believe in justice. The economic progress and realization of the full potential of a fellow Caribbean nation continues to be stifled by a now infamous economic embargo of over 45 years. As a result, its people are humiliated by shortages and deprived of basic necessities essential to decent human existence. The vast majority of countries in the world have consistently and overwhelmingly voted in this very forum for its removal, but the irony persists.

Grenada again urges the United States of America to do what is right and completely lift the harsh economic measures against the people of Cuba, if only on humanitarian grounds. In the spirit of fair trade and good-neighbourliness, Grenada also calls on the United States to honour the recent decision in favour of Antigua and Barbuda in the World Trade Organization, as that too would show respect for the decisions of international tribunals.

Grenada reminds the world of the Caribbean Community's instant and pivotal response and continuing presence in Haiti, following the devastating earthquake earlier this year. The successful rebuilding of Haiti will benefit all, and Grenada calls for a swift delivery of the pledged commitments made to that sister Caribbean nation.

We are obliged to work selflessly to preserve the world for future generations. The avoidance of a nuclear confrontation is one sure way. We therefore congratulate the Government of the United States and all other Governments that have put much time and effort towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We are also encouraged by recent positive signs of engagement between warring parties, and we hope that political and military conflicts around the world and, moreover, in the Middle East will soon come to an end. Grenada is particularly pleased that the Palestinians and Israelis are prepared to resume talks over their long-standing dispute with a view to finding a lasting peace once and for all.

We empathize with the many countries that have had to cope with recent natural disasters: Chile, China, Pakistan, New Zealand and Guatemala.

Over the decades, the United Nations has played critical roles in almost every facet of global affairs: political, economic and social. That is its strength, its enduring mission. Grenada remains ready to work with all who are partnering in political, economic and social development and seeing the United Nations as a forum for working through all thorny issues.

However, there will be no international peace and stability if people are unhappy, if they have no food or clothing, if they have no potable water or shelter from adverse climatic conditions. There will be no security if disputes cannot be settled amicably, if nations are not free to determine their own destiny and if diversity among us is not recognized and fully respected. The world would certainly be a better place if we shared our world's resources to assist the more vulnerable among us.

I challenge this Organization, for another 65 years starting with this sixty-fifth session, to harness our strengths and continue to make the United Nations what we all want it to be — a real force for good in the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Information and Legal Affairs of Grenada for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Information and Legal Affairs of Grenada, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Ms. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, MP, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ms. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, MP, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Ms. Persad-Bissessar (Trinidad and Tobago): First, I offer my congratulations on your election, Mr. President. I also take this opportunity to recognize the leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whose influence brought to this sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly 139 heads of State or Government to rededicate efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

It is with a sense of hope for a better world that I address this Assembly of leaders and decision makers. I join the Assembly and the international community in echoing the call for a world where people are again placed at the centre of our actions, where the care of children is given greater priority, where poverty is seen as an enemy of human dignity, where peace can be achieved without bloodshed, where conversations resulting in greater tolerance, mutual respect and understanding would motivate cooperation and unity, and where selflessly sacrificing one's best skills and resources for the benefit of fellow human beings would be the primary purpose of our actions. I believe that all of this is possible if we recommit ourselves to the founding principles upon which the United Nations was built.

The United Nations must continue to provide a voice to all States whether small or large, developed or developing, industrialized or agrarian. The Charter of the United Nations provides for the sovereign equality of all States. It must be at the centre of all discussions and decisions geared towards meeting the demands of its membership in this third millennium. For that reason, we welcome the theme of this year's debate: "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance".

We are of the view, as are many of you, that no nation will be safe and no democracy will prevail if there is no mutual cooperation towards global stability, fashioned by opportunity for all, equity and the ability to feed, provide health care, clothing, housing and education for people everywhere. We are all in this together. We shall rise or fall together.

Let us not take for granted the significance of our presence here. That we can sit in one Hall means that we can also work together to achieve those noble objectives, which foster and promote global peace and stability.

To realize those goals, our debate of this topic must not be reduced to empty rhetoric and nice language. We must reaffirm the essential role of the United Nations in resolving global issues and make the United Nations more accountable. So we must look at a wider definition of global governance.

It is our respectful view that global governance must not only mean agreement on a body of rules, laws or practices that place the United Nations at the centre of all matters which confront the international community; it must also mean that we hold our leaders and institutions more accountable for their actions, delivering a better quality of life for all our peoples. No nation large or small must be exempted.

Global governance cannot be limited to the crafting of instruments related to the promotion of democracy. A key component must be the creation of fair and equitable rules to enhance the development prospects of developing countries as well. We recognize the rules governing membership of groups such as the Group of 20 (G20), but a mechanism must, we believe, be established to insert the voice of the United Nations in the activities of those groups, such that the concerns and needs of all Members are actively considered. Trinidad and Tobago therefore calls for the establishment of predictable and regular channels to facilitate dialogue between the G20 nations and Members of the United Nations, which constitute the "Group of 192" or the "G192". It is our hope that some of those issues will be examined at the next G20 Summit, scheduled in November of this year.

At the same time, Trinidad and Tobago, as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth, calls on the General

Assembly to recognize the important work being done by the Commonwealth, especially as it relates to small and vulnerable economies. The international community must do more to deal with the economic plight of its most vulnerable Members, which depend heavily on the flow of international capital and trade to ensure that their development needs are met. Trinidad and Tobago intends to use its position as Chair of the Commonwealth to promote enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth so as to facilitate measures aimed at providing development financing in a predictable manner to developing countries. This would mean a willingness on the part of international financial institutions to re-examine whether some of their policies have been creating a perpetual cycle of poverty for small nations. Such a cycle must not be allowed to continue.

A few days ago I participated here in the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals. Since then, the question that keeps lingering in my mind is whether we would have to convene another meeting in the future — shortly — to restate the urgent need to provide the necessary assistance to developing countries, so that they can meet the MDGs. While I applaud the noble efforts of the United Nations in providing an enabling environment for leaders to exchange ideas and to formulate solutions on the subject, I must confess that over the years we have had ample rhetoric but insufficient action on this matter.

In my country we have put in place a Ministry of the People to deal with poverty eradication and hunger as a priority. This is just one vehicle aimed at placing us in a position to honour our commitments to reduce poverty. However, we are of the firm view that international cooperation is also essential. Good governance requires that developed countries fulfil their commitments made at the Millennium Summit to provide assistance to developing countries, so that those countries can achieve the MDGs by the deadline set. The deficit in commitment has to be addressed if real advances are to be made. We all have a duty to the future. It will be measured by how we fulfil our responsibilities today.

My Government has created the Children's Life Fund to provide funding and critical support for children needing life-saving surgery. It is our belief that children must not die in our country — or in any other country — because they cannot afford health care — not in the year 2010. There must be new arrangements and relationships between countries that have advanced medical technology and those without, so that children of the poorest nations can grow as healthy human beings and achieve their full potential. It is only when this is done that the world will progress.

My colleague from Grenada spoke about non-communicable diseases. Trinidad and Tobago, joined by other members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), has reiterated that call for international attention on the issue of the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. We have agreed that in September 2011 a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on non-communicable diseases will be convened (resolution 64/265). Much work remains to be done, if we are to have a successful meeting next year. In order to achieve the desired results, the United Nations will have put in place a common set of principles to tackle this important concern of global public health.

On the issue of climate change, we say that Trinidad and Tobago, as a small island developing State, seeks to promote and safeguard the welfare of our planet from the harmful effects of climate change and supports measures aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change, which threaten our environment, economic livelihood, territorial integrity and the very survival of many States. Although the United Nations continues to be at the forefront of discussions to confront this formidable challenge, progress has been much too slow. In making our contribution to the process, we wish to reiterate the position of the Alliance of Small Island States, namely, that there should be deep and ambitious cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by developed countries amounting to about 40 to 50 per cent by the year 2020 and 85 to 90 per cent by 2050.

In order for there to be meaningful advancement at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Mexico, we must utilize the coming United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in China, to agree on the identification of additional and predictable sources of finance, institutional issues related to finance and the form of the final agreement. It is our respectful view that urgent and concerted action is the only viable option to bring about results at the upcoming negotiations.

I turn now to the issue of natural disasters. One of the first problems I encountered, almost immediately after taking the oath of office four months ago, was the issue of unprecedented and widespread flooding that resulted in tremendous financial and other losses to victims and placed a strain on the resources of the local emergency management services. My Government continues to provide assistance to the affected communities, while we devise long-term strategies to reduce the incidence of this type of flooding. Nevertheless, I recognize that we are not alone to have been faced with this grave problem. Recent events in Haiti, Pakistan and Russia have demonstrated that greater international action is needed to provide relief to those affected by flooding and other natural disasters.

In the Caribbean the case of a devastated Haiti provides the international community with the opportunity not only to be compassionate, but to also learn major lessons on disaster preparedness and management. Respectfully I say that — notwithstanding the valuable work being done by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), to which Trinidad and Tobago has made annual contributions — more action is required to provide the agency with the requisite resources in the face of ever increasing natural disasters. In this regard, I respectfully call upon those States that are in a position to do so to make financial contributions to CERF, so that it can respond more efficiently and effectively to humanitarian crises due to floods and other natural disasters.

There is another persistent matter receiving the attention of my Government and others of the CARICOM region, which is the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. In our attempts to address this problem, we have had to divert financial resources that we could have used otherwise for economic and social development. We have observed an increase in gang-related violence, homicides, the illegal narcotics trade and organized crime. The origin of the illicit trade in those weapons is beyond our national borders. It is of international dimension and therefore requires a global response. We are encouraged by the attempts of the United Nations to conclude a legally binding agreement to regulate the trade in conventional weapons. It is our view that this instrument must also make provision for regulating the trade in small arms and light weapons, thereby preventing their illegal diversion.

Trinidad and Tobago also calls for a strong and effective implementation regime to ensure proper compliance with the provisions of the treaty to be drafted. It must also include a proper verification mechanism and a sanctions regime for breach of its terms. Such safeguards would assist in preserving the object and purpose of the agreement.

We have partnered with other members of the international community to establish rules governing the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and other types of weapons, which could create untold suffering for humanity. However, in the Caribbean, our weapons of mass destruction, are, ironically, small arms and light weapons. Therefore I implore all those States that have been reticent about the need for an arms trade treaty to join us in this undertaking. I pledge the commitment of my Government to work with other like-minded States to ensure a successful outcome of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty and ultimately the Conference itself, scheduled to take place in 2012.

Tied together with the issue of small arms and ammunition is drug trafficking. Regulating the trade in small arms and light weapons is not an end in itself. Urgent international action must also be taken to deal with the issue of international drug trafficking. We cannot allow our young people to continue to fall victim to this monster, which has fuelled transnational organized crime and resulted in cross-border armed violence, threatening the political and social stability of many nations. National Governments alone cannot solve this problem because of its global dimension. Governments are forced to divert scarce resources, which should be used for social programmes, in order to confront the challenge posed by narco-trafficking. We need urgent action to address this problem.

In 1989, the Honourable Arthur Robinson, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, took the political initiative to reintroduce on the agenda of the General Assembly the need for the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC). The Court has since been established. However, his call for international drug trafficking to be included as a crime within the jurisdiction of the ICC has not yet been realized. Today, I say that it is even more critical for this to be done. I therefore respectfully call upon States Members of the United Nations which are States parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC to include international drug trafficking as a

crime within the jurisdiction of the ICC. The ICC is the only credible international judicial organ with the competence to prosecute those who perpetrate this crime.

In closing, I wish to raise one area of reform that I hold very dearly. That is the establishment of UN Women, an entity which consolidates four previous agencies. I am confident that this venture, which will become fully operational by January 2011, will provide a coherent approach in attending to issues affecting women internationally. It is my hope that UN Women will receive the support of all States.

Finally, 10 years ago the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, acknowledging that there can be no sustainable peace and security without the involvement and contribution of women. Trinidad and Tobago is committed to advancing the peace and security agenda of the United Nations, and my country's attachment to the promotion of women is equally strong. That is why I wish to state that Trinidad and Tobago will introduce in the First Committee of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament, international peace and security, a resolution on women, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. I pledge the support of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for this initiative.

We have spent a decade in this third millennium. In retrospect, have we advanced as a world community in ways that will create a sustainable environment and secure the lives of people everywhere? Yes, we have made tremendous strides in communications technology; yes, we are a global village as a result of improvements; but, regrettably, we cannot say that we are our neighbours' keepers. There are still too many fences between us — fences of politics, ideology, religion, ethnicity, culture and traditions. As human beings, we have the unique capacity to reason and on the basis of that reasoning to develop deeper understandings. Today, I respectfully say: Let us pledge to use this understanding gained from reasoning to promote conversations between nations and peoples; conversations to replace aggression and threats; conversations geared towards finding peaceful ways to deal with differences; conversations borne out of mutual respect for each other as people and nations; conversations founded upon respect for diversity; conversations that ensure the survival of the human race and the planet as their purpose.

As I end my contribution to this debate, I wish to compliment the United Nations for all of the work designed to revitalize this unique global body. I also affirm our support for efforts and policies aimed at revitalizing the central role of the United Nations in global governance.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Ms. Jadranka Kosor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia.

Ms. Jadranka Kosor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Jadranka Kosor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Ms. Kosor (Croatia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly, and to stress that you can count on the full support of the Croatian delegation in the coming year. At the same time, I would like to thank Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his successful work as President of the General Assembly over the past year and for the results achieved under his leadership.

The consequences of the serious threats facing the modern world — from terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to humanitarian crises and climate change, to mention just a few — reach far beyond the original framework within which they began. Without exception, they are acquiring global proportions. In the same way, contemporary social and economic relationships have grown far beyond narrow national frameworks and, through the flow of people, goods, services and capital, are creating a global network of mutual relations and influence. Does the recent eruption of the volcano on Iceland not testify to this in as vivid a manner as the

joint humanitarian actions undertaken in response to recent terrifying natural disasters?

This accelerated development of the contemporary world, and especially the challenges and threats to which it is exposed, call on all of us to take swift action, shoulder joint responsibility and foment new solidarity. There is no alternative to working together in today's world.

In that vein, the theme you have chosen, Sir, for the opening of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly reminds us, in focusing on the concept of global governance, of the role of the Assembly in formulating the global response to the challenges we face in today's world. At the same time, your proposal calls for an examination of our own contribution to the formulation of responses to these challenges.

During its membership of the Security Council, Croatia promoted the ideas that are the backbone of all civilized governance and therefore also of global governance: the importance of the rule of law and the protection and promotion of international law, especially human rights and minority rights, international humanitarian law and transparency in the work of the main bodies of the United Nations.

Within the rich legal heritage of the United Nations, the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) has particular significance. That document confirms the global strategy of the United Nations in areas crucial to the life and well-being of a large proportion of humankind, and unites the activities of the relevant institutions in this sphere. For Croatia, implementing the Millennium Development Goals is of additional importance because of their strong link with the priorities related to the process of our accession to the European Union, which has entered its final phase.

Croatia has decided to confirm its readiness to participate in the international activities aimed at achieving these goals by increasing its financial contribution to the programmes and activities of the United Nations. In that context, allow me to mention the Republic of Croatia's successful shift from recipient to provider of international aid. Croatia has aimed its support at the neighbouring region of South-East Europe, where our knowledge and experience may be most useful to the recipient countries.

Along with its contribution of peacekeeping troops, police and military experts to 14 international missions led by the United Nations, NATO and the European Union, Croatia is also ready to share its experience with States emerging from armed conflict by offering expert advice and other services in the field of security and defence sector reform and in reintegrating demobilized persons into civilian society.

I would particularly like to emphasize that peacebuilding support for countries emerging from armed conflict is one of the most important and complex challenges confronting the United Nations. In that light, Croatia strongly supports the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the report (A/64/868, annex) drawn up by the co-facilitators of the process of reviewing the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and the work of the Commission. Croatia was a founding member of the Peacebuilding Commission, and, wishing to continue contributing to the significant efforts being made in this area, has announced that it will be a candidate for membership of the Commission for the period 2012-2013.

However important our joint action at the global level may be to finding responses to the many challenges that confront us, it is imperative when it comes to attempting to find a deterrent to the use of nuclear weapons. In recent years, we have witnessed a renewed desire within the international community for a world without nuclear weapons, which Croatia also recognized in the historic Security Council summit of September last year on the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with President Barack Obama presiding (see S/PV.6191).

Making its own contribution to the significant efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, in June the Republic of Croatia successfully organized a regional workshop on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Of course, in Croatia we are aware that mere words and adopted documents are not enough, especially to preventing the direct threat posed by the possibility of terrorists getting hold of weapons of mass destruction. We therefore welcome the concrete steps being taken by the nuclear States to reduce their nuclear capacities and to increase the transparency and security of nuclear reserves.

At the same time, we must not forget that, in parallel with the existence of a nuclear threat, the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons has taken many human lives. Croatia most strongly condemns

terrorism and is wholly dedicated to preventing this threat in all its various forms at the national, regional and global levels. In an attempt to make a contribution to these efforts, during its time as a member of the Security Council Croatia chaired the Counter-Terrorism Committee for two years. During its presidency of the Security Council in December 2008, Croatia organized a debate on the subject of threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (see S/PV.6034). The Council then adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/45) calling on all Members of the United Nations to show the same level of solidarity they displayed immediately after the tragic events of 11 September 2001.

As a member of NATO and a future member of the European Union, Croatia is strongly engaged in securing peace and stability in South-East Europe. This is also precisely the reason why we advocate a clear Euro-Atlantic perspective for all the States in the region. To realize that perspective, it is first necessary to accept and fully apply the principles on which European integration was initiated 60 years ago: cooperation, dialogue and mutual respect.

In that spirit, Croatia and Slovenia last year agreed on a solution to their long-running border dispute through international arbitration. By my agreement with Slovenian Prime Minister Borut Pahor, a new page was turned in Croatian-Slovenian relations, and at the same time a way was opened for all the other countries of South-East Europe to realize their right to a European future through dialogue and cooperation.

In that sense, I would like here to welcome the decision by the General Assembly to adopt by consensus a resolution on Kosovo (64/298) sponsored by Serbia and the European Union. In this way, a completely new European paradigm of cooperation, peace and progress is being created in South-East Europe. Croatia will lead the way in supporting and promoting these values throughout the region, and especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which also has the right to a Euro-Atlantic perspective as a united State of three constitutive and equal peoples. There is no real alternative to the Euro-Atlantic future, and any attempt to go back to the old and failed ways of the past would be extremely harmful. This is the only sphere of peace and security ensuring prosperity in the Euro-Atlantic zone whose doors will be open to the countries of South-East Europe that meet the conditions for membership of NATO and the European Union.

With this in mind, the Republic of Croatia advocates the accepted concept of responsibility for the protection of civilians against genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We welcome, support and follow with special attention the work of the International Criminal Court. In the same vein, allow me to point out here that the Republic of Croatia supports the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and welcomes the Tribunal's exit strategy.

Finally, this is an opportunity for me to say that the Republic of Croatia, in line with its focus to date on human rights, will continue its activities to protect and promote them. I especially welcome the establishment of UN Women as an important and welcome new body within the Organization, aimed at supporting gender equality and strengthening the position of women.

In closing, allow me to end this address by asserting that lasting and civilized governance, especially insofar as it includes the United Nations, must arise from the individual and return to the individual. The protection of the dignity of human life, and the dignity and identity of each nation, is the firm foundation on which the United Nations can fulfil its task to promote peace and security in today's globalized world.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Jadranka Kosor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Zalmai Rassoul, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Mr. Rassoul (Afghanistan): I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I am confident that, under your able stewardship, our deliberations will be fruitful.

Sixty-five years ago, the creation of the United Nations heralded hope for global peace, security and

respect for human dignity. Today, the United Nations remains the most effective universal body for preserving the principles upon which it was founded. As one of its earliest Member States, Afghanistan fully and consistently subscribes to the centrality of the United Nations and to the principles of multilateralism that guarantee a democratic international order in which we all have an equal voice and participation in decisions impacting our world.

Today more than ever before, our world demands a commitment to working together so that we may overcome the multifaceted challenges and threats to our survival and well-being. The United Nations is pivotal to our ability to translate our common sense of purpose and determined political will to replace desperation with hope, poverty with prosperity, injustice with justice and violence with peace.

Last week, the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted an outcome document and plan of action for the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals (resolution 65/1). Fifteen years ago when the MDGs were adopted, we recognized that comprehensive and collective effort was essential to the attainment of the Goals. Last week's summit again underscored the need for enhanced international cooperation and coordination in order to achieve human development and well-being.

Afghanistan remains fully committed to meeting its MDG targets. We have made some progress, but the scourge of international terrorism, insecurity and threats to the rule of law and governance remain enormous challenges to promoting human development in Afghanistan.

On the eve of the ninth anniversary of the declaration of the global war on terror in October 2001, the international community's promise to the people of Afghanistan of a life free from the fear of the threat and exploitation of international terrorism remains unfulfilled. Afghans continue to suffer from horrific acts of terrorist violence on a daily basis.

On many occasions from this rostrum, the Afghan delegation has drawn the global community's attention to the reality that terrorism and the ideologies of extremism and radicalism are spawned beyond the borders of Afghanistan. In spite of the combined efforts of our military allies, terrorists continue to infiltrate our borders with the intent of inflicting harm on our people and the brave soldiers of partner countries. As long as certain State and non-State actors provide Al-Qaida and affiliated individuals and entities with sanctuary, arms and financing, they will remain formidable and murderous adversaries.

Terrorism in our region is a growing threat to world peace and security. The audacity and geographic scope of extremist and terrorist groups harboured in our region continue to expand. If our international partners and allies wish to win the global war on terrorism, they must look beyond villages in Afghanistan and engage in a strategy that will effectively and decisively dismantle organizations and networks that continue to support terrorist and radical militants with impunity. Terrorism remains a global challenge that can be defeated only through a concerted international effort.

In this context, Afghanistan is committed to expanding counter-terrorism cooperation with the Government of Pakistan and with other countries in our region.

The people of Afghanistan have known too much violence and too much despair. We have seen too many of our young people lose their lives as a result of war and conflict. The Afghan people crave peace, stability and security. Although our fight against those who menace the lives and well-being of our people will continue unabated, we recognize that the success of our efforts for development and prosperity will depend largely on our ability to achieve sustainable peace in our country.

With this objective in mind, the Afghan Government convened a National Consultative Peace Jirga in June of this year. The Jirga fulfilled President Karzai's promise to consult and engage all Afghans in peacebuilding initiatives. The Jirga — which assembled tribal leaders, parliamentarians, and representatives of provincial councils, businesses and civil society, and had over 20 per cent female participation — helped to jump-start a representative peace and reconciliation process that will be pursued in conformity with our Constitution and human rights commitments.

The Consultative Peace Jirga agreed on a framework to encourage the rank and file of the Taliban to end violence and to join a reconciliation and reintegration process. It defined the conditions for a peace dialogue with Taliban leaders and endorsed the

establishment of a peace commission to oversee the reintegration of armed opposition fighters who renounce violence, resume civilian life, accept our Constitution and embrace our democracy.

Over the past eight years, we and our international partners have realized substantial achievements, but also have made mistakes. Many challenges and obstacles remain to ensuring sustainable security for the people of Afghanistan and to meeting their aspirations to a better life and future. At the London and Kabul Conferences held earlier this year, the international community not only reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability, but also recognized the critical importance of Afghan ownership and leadership to consolidating our joint achievements and engaging the greater confidence of the Afghan people.

By building on the mutual commitments made at the milestone Conferences in London and Kabul to transfer security and development responsibilities to the Afghans, and by pursing comprehensive economic development, security, governance and our inclusive reconciliation strategies, we are convinced that we will successfully combat the efforts of extremists and terrorists seeking to regain hold of Afghanistan.

For our part, the Government of Afghanistan is steadfast in its commitment to pursuing the reform agenda that President Karzai outlined in his inaugural speech. We are committed to reinforcing our social compact with the people of Afghanistan by strengthening our judiciary, combating corruption, revitalizing our economy and promoting good governance at all levels of the Government. As demonstrated by the recently held parliamentary elections, the Government and the people of Afghanistan are steadfast in advancing our democracy.

With the support and collaboration of our international partners and allies, we are committed to enhancing the capacity and ability of the Afghan Security Forces to assume greater responsibility for the protection and security of our country. In this context, I wish to acknowledge the enhanced effort of our military allies to protect our civilian populations from the detrimental effects of military operations against the terrorists and militants.

The people of Afghanistan embrace the challenge of building a better future. However, the insidious dangers of extremism and terrorism and their ever-increasing link to narcotics pose a serious threat to the security and stability of our country and our region. Alongside our fight against terrorism, we are committed to working closely with our neighbours and other international partners to win the war on narcotics.

To complement our efforts to eliminate poppy production, we wish to see greater action to counter smuggling of precursors into our country and to reduce the demand for and consumption of drugs in other countries.

Recent climate-induced disasters experienced in our region, such as the catastrophic floods in Pakistan, not only pose severe challenges for local populations and national Governments, but may also have ramifications for the economies of countries in the region and for global security. We see increased urgency for effective regional collaboration on disaster mitigation and response.

At various international, regional and subregional gatherings, we have emphasized the importance of a stable, democratic and moderate Afghanistan to the economic development of our region and global security. By virtue of its location at the crossroads of four geostrategically important regions — Central Asia, South Asia, China and the Middle East — Afghanistan could play an important role in facilitating increased trade and transit and unleashing the enormous potential of our region. We will work towards further gains in trade and transit with countries in the region.

The recent conclusion of the Afghanistan-Pakistan- Transit Trade Agreement and the signing by the heads of State of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India of an agreement on a gas pipeline project are milestones for increased regional cooperation. In addition, we have concluded the feasibility study for a Central Asia-South Asia project for the transfer of electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan. These initiatives will contribute greatly to peace, security and stability in our region. Afghanistan stands ready to step up cooperation with all its neighbours on economic, political and crime-related issues.

I have spoken of the desire of the people of Afghanistan for peace and stability and of our right to them. We are, however, acutely aware that for over half a century our brothers and sisters in Palestine have

been denied their right to an independent State living in peaceful coexistence with its neighbours. We are encouraged by the resumption of direct talks between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership, which give us hope that sustainable peace in the Middle East may be secured.

To conclude, I thank the States members of this Assembly for their solidarity and their support for the liberty and well-being of the people of Afghanistan. The Afghan people will never forget the generosity and great sacrifices of the United States, NATO and other international partners, whose men and women have bravely stood with us to defend our common security and ensure peace and stability for Afghanistan.

I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts to revitalize the sense of partnership, cooperation and confidence between Afghanistan and the international community. I also thank the dedicated and committed staff of the United Nations and its specialized agencies for helping the Afghan people build a peaceful, secure and prosperous future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Samuel Santos López, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nicaragua.

Mr. Santos López (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the name of the Nicaraguan people and of Comrade President Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, I convey my warmest brotherly greetings to you, Sir, and to each and every one of the peoples and Governments represented in the General Assembly.

As the shadows of apocalyptic threats darken the world stage, we begin to doubt the capacity for reason and the strength of the most noble sentiments of human beings to face up to the serious problems confronting humanity. Various types of information are manipulated by the global communications media in order to continually discredit the independence efforts of the Governments of the South. They disseminate the idea that humanity is impotent in the face of the present state of disaster and that we must prepare for the worst. Furthermore, what is worse is that they tell us that no one is responsible and that it is a faceless disaster, seeking thus to exonerate the industrialized countries of the North.

However, we know full well that the underlying cause of the serious crises we are experiencing is the nature of the system of economic, political and social relations established by global capitalism and the effort to have that system accepted as a universal paradigm.

In this regard, the poor countries, which are referred to by the euphemism "developing countries", can strip away the masks of those who — driven by greed, selfishness and the desire for absolute power in the name of manifest destiny or of divine reason — have brought humankind to the brink of extinction.

Nicaragua, which has experienced the pain and injustice of war first-hand, is against war. We do not accept the failure of reason. We do not accept war as the obligatory language among peoples. Nicaragua rejects war as a solution to conflicts between States. We reject war as a means for appropriating the planet's natural resources or for imposing the hegemony of a few over the majority of the world's nations. War will never lead to solutions partial or full, much less definitive. The invasion of Iraq by foreign troops under false pretexts has brought neither peace nor stability to that country. On the contrary, it has left that country in ruins and failed to bring greater stability to the region.

The war in Afghanistan has become a dead end for the occupiers. At the same time, it has also had negative effects on its neighbours. Security Council resolution 1929 (2010), which imposes new sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran, has only served to increase the possibility of a large-scale military conflict with unforeseeable consequences. The war games on the Korean peninsula increase tensions in that region, jeopardizing the gains achieved between the two Koreas. Neither Europe nor the Persian Gulf has escaped the expanding zone of militarization. Similarly, the establishment of military bases and the deployment of naval and air power on Latin American soil threaten the political stability of our nations.

"Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace". This saying of Benito Juárez, President of Mexico and the first indigenous president in the Americas, clearly reflects the conception of and will for peace among the peoples of the world. This apothegm should guide our Organization, and in particular the Security Council, ensuring that their actions adhere strictly to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Moreover, Nicaragua believes that there is a close relation between disarmament and development. Our commitment to security includes a commitment to the promotion of human rights, which we interpret as

tantamount to sustainable development centred on the human being and implemented in an environment of good governance with direct citizen participation and social equality, which are indispensable to real development.

From our point of view, the resources freed up as a result of disarmament efforts should be directed to ensuring the attainment of the national social development goals of each of our countries. One only has to take a brief glance at the trillions of dollars spent on war to realize how many human problems could be solved with these funds, alleviating the pain caused by poverty and exclusion. The global economic and financial crisis has had little or no effect on global military spending.

Nicaragua remains actively committed to the cause of general and complete disarmament. Nicaragua believes that only a climate of fundamental trust and solidarity can guarantee strict compliance with arms control and disarmament accords with a view to attaining complete disarmament — and especially nuclear disarmament — as the only option for achieving real and lasting world peace. Nicaragua supports the inalienable right of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and without discrimination. Nicaragua encourages actions to promote the exchange of material resources, equipment and technology for the peaceful use of nuclear energy in order to guarantee the sustainable economic development of every nation and the world.

Precisely because of this belief, Nicaragua demands that neither Iran nor any other nation be taken to task for developing nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes. It is possible to build trust based on dialogue and negotiation. In this context, Nicaragua joins the general support expressed for the tripartite declaration of Brazil, Turkey and Iran, which constitutes an alternative for promoting regional and world peace.

That which was a warning yesterday is today a reality. The present international context is leading to a global political crisis. The entire political model constructed and articulated around the paradigm of neo-liberalism, globalization and the free market is in question. At the global level, we need more decisive action to affirm multilateralism as the new paradigm. Such multilateralism must listen to the voices of peoples living in extreme poverty and underdevelopment. It must take the new political realities into account and effectively democratize the world order, beginning with this Organization, including the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole; re-establish the representational and democratic rights of its 192 Member States; and identify the rights and obligations that are common to all States without undermining their sovereignty, independence and self-determination, regardless of their size.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, this trend is manifest in the process of integration and unity taking place among our peoples. We have already made the historic decision to create the Latin American and Caribbean Community of States, whose institutionalization will begin next year and conclude in 2012. This is further and unquestionable proof of the profound changes taking place in the world.

The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America has become the vanguard of this process of change. The struggle against intervention of all kinds, including military intervention, and for the maintenance and re-establishment of peace is an essential component of the Alliance's action in its relations with the world, and strengthens its capacity to guarantee the national sovereignty of its peoples.

Nicaragua joins the brotherly people of Puerto Rico in waving the flag of its independence which has been unjustly trampled. The criminal economic blockade by the Government of the United States of America against the brotherly people and Government of heroic Cuba must stop immediately, and the five Cuban heroes, counter-terrorism combatants imprisoned in United States jails, must be released now.

We express our solidarity with the brotherly people of Argentina in their demand for sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands and with the brotherly people of the Democratic Arab Saharan Republic in their quest to be recognized as an independent State.

The war and State terrorism against the people of Palestine must immediately cease. All Security Council and General Assembly resolutions concerning Israel must be respected and complied with. We must tie the hands of those who fan the flames of hatred and war and are capable of attacking a humanitarian *flotilla* — an act that has been denounced by the Human Rights Council commission of inquiry.

We salute the invitation extended by the international community to Taiwan to participate in the work of some United Nations specialized agencies directly related to the well-being of the 23 million Taiwanese. In this regard, we call on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Civil Aviation Organization to adopt a similar position.

Never before have we had so much information or, I hope, been so conscious of the severity of the environmental crisis affecting our planet. Our awareness of the gravity of the situation makes it indispensable that we forge a coalition of forces based on the common values and inspiring principles that serve as the ethical foundation and catalyst for practices to promote a sustainable way of life. The Earth, with its minerals and sources of energy; with its land, water, forests and marine life; with its ecosystems and micro-organisms, must be recognized as our supreme and universal benefactor and an integral part of humankind, and not only as a source of survival.

Global capitalism, with its logic of competition and unlimited growth and its unsustainable modes of production and consumption, separates human beings from nature and establishes a relationship of dominion over it. This situation must change and be restored to the right track before it is too late for us all.

The meeting in Copenhagen demonstrated the power of the interests that block decisive action on climate change and the rights of Mother Earth. It left us with the unpleasant feeling that we had wasted our time and that those who impede the urgent solutions needed to address the critical state of Mother Earth are uncommitted to change. With our eyes fixed on hope, we continue to promote our commitments based on the fundamental principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. These should be proportional to the greenhouse gas emissions accumulated since the onset of the Industrial Revolution and not since last year. Those who have historically caused the damage should assume most of the responsibility.

In that hope, Nicaragua was the first country of the world to have signed the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, and calls on all the countries of the world to sign it. It was also in that hope that Nicaragua signed the People's Agreement adopted in Cochabamba in April during the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. It is in that hope that Nicaragua trusts that, when we arrive in Cancún, we will be united in seeking agreements that will at least partially reverse the harm, and in taking a path that re-establishes the lost or gravely endangered balance between humankind and Mother Earth.

Although it is proclaimed without much support that the worst of the global economic and financial crisis is behind us, its most serious effects remain and continue to greatly affect our peoples. We should not continue to accept the imposition of economic models based on the pillage and exploitation of our riches.

For all of those reasons, Nicaragua and most of the Latin American nations are dedicated to building an alternative model of economic sovereignty, a sphere of interdependence and solidarity that will enable us to face global capitalism's profound crisis and to recover our capacity to determine our own paths to development. We reaffirm that the development strategies of each country are their own responsibility, that they should have national ownership and leadership, and that foreign cooperation should be in line with the strategies, plans and objectives of the country that receives it.

In connection with the urgent need to create a new model, we reiterate our support for the outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development of June 2009 (resolution 63/303, annex). There can be no economic recovery or balance in the inequality with the present model, which concentrates the income and wealth among and within nations.

All of this should take place in a framework of mutual respect, devoid of punitive political conditions against our peoples that would block and stifle the development of the countries of the South.

Besides the hundreds of millions of people in the world who suffer from hunger, we have before us the terrifying reality that in developing countries, 10.9 million children under the age of five die every year. Malnutrition and hunger-related diseases cause 60 per cent of those deaths. The cost of malnutrition to national economic development is estimated at between $20 and $30 billion per year. That intolerable situation must stop. The developed countries must fulfil their commitments to eliminate the suffering of millions of human beings.

Nicaragua reaffirms its decision to confront, with the means available to it and in the context of its national sovereignty, the different forms of transnational organized crime, which have become a permanent threat to domestic and international security. Similarly, Nicaragua reiterates its position of combating terrorism in all its forms and whatever their source.

There are several processes that are hampering necessary and urgent changes. The most prominent is the suppression of information — not saying anything in order to perpetuate ignorance. And when information is made available, it is distorted and always against the peoples' interests and their legitimate aspirations and experiences, thus converting lies into truths and vice versa, converting a smile into a sneer, words into noise and an objective fact into virtual reality.

The universal citizen is witness, through global communication, to a real war for truth and freedom, forced to confront a permanent, slanderous campaign against change, against hope and against the proper evolution of history. That campaign has far-reaching implications and has the goal of destroying the process of direct popular democracy and of the profound and revolutionary social transformations that are taking place in our countries as a result of the triumph of revolutionary political forces, as is the case in Nicaragua with the Sandinista Front. We must denounce the campaign waged by hegemonic and selfish interests in a few countries in an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of our political system and our people's Government.

Nicaragua proclaims its right to live in peace and to combat the poverty, illiteracy, hunger and malnutrition generated by historic exclusion and the imposition of an economic and political model that is alien to our reality. Nicaragua declares its dignity, sovereignty, self-determination, respect, unity and solidarity with all the peoples of the Earth, as guaranteed by the United Nations Charter. Nicaragua is working to develop a social awareness of solidarity identified with the ideals of humankind, justice, freedom and democracy for all, without exception.

From this forum, Nicaragua makes a vehement call for world peace, for the survival of the human species, for the dignified future of the noblest aspirations of men and women. That is the only possible future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Peter Shanel Agovaka, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of the Solomon Islands.

Mr. Agovaka (Solomon Islands): It is indeed an honour for me to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands, as President of the General Assembly at our sixty-fifth session. Your term in office coincides with economic turmoil, the impacts of climate change, growing social and security concerns and threats of unilateralism that are challenging multilateralism from all fronts. My delegation is pleased with the manner in which you have convened and concluded three high-level meetings, on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), biodiversity and the Mauritius Strategy. That is a clear indication of why we are confident in you and of your vast experience as you oversee this principal body of the United Nations for the next 12 months.

My delegation takes this opportunity to acknowledge as well the leadership and contributions of your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki. His support for multilateralism has placed us on firm footing in preparing for this session.

We see around us the growth of democracy, corporate power and the emergence of new powers, all offering new perspectives and opportunities. New international cooperation is linking development, finance, raw materials and markets. That development calls for increased collaboration and a new framework to facilitate the emergence of a new economic order. Solomon Islands, under its new foreign policy, will establish relationships with all six regions of the United Nations.

Solomon Islands believes in multilateralism and acknowledges the importance and value of having a closer working relationship between the United Nations and Member States. My Government stands ready and committed to work with the United Nations in enhancing its presence in my capital. In that connection, we renew our call to upgrade the United Nations Sub-office in Honiara and appoint a resident representative as its head.

My delegation acknowledges United Nations outreach to Solomon Islands this year by convening the

United Nations national competitive recruitment exam in December. We welcome that engagement, as it provides an opportunity for successful citizens to fill our national quota of international civil servants serving our family of nations.

Democracy is one of the core principles of the United Nations Charter. People continue to be the source of the legitimacy of this Organization and remain the basis of authority of this Assembly.

Solomon Islands registers its appreciation of the Secretariat's Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme for their role in coordinating some 400 local and international observers who monitored last month's general election. We are equally pleased to note the positive pronouncement by the various local and international monitors that Solomon Islands' national election was conducted in a free and fair manner. A number of electoral reform recommendations were made, and my Government will act on them with a view to improving our national electoral system.

The essence of progress and prosperity lies in having a clear and firm leadership, an obedient bureaucracy and a sense of vision. My Government is committed to providing those, and we will work tirelessly to offer our people a life of normality, dignity and freedom.

The challenge of nation-building is huge and costly for any developing country. For that reason, each country has to define for itself the type and form of democracy it wants to adopt, for democracy cannot be imposed. In that connection, Solomon Islands continues to advocate genuine dialogue and engagement with Fiji over confrontations and sanctions and to support Fiji's effort to determine its destiny.

Solomon Islands joins the international community in calling for the lifting of the 49-year-old economic embargo against Cuba. Such an embargo belongs to a different time and era. It is our hope that the power of reaching out to our neighbours will break down artificial ideological barriers.

Solomon Islands will be undergoing the universal periodic review during this session. My delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of Solomon Islands to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. Solomon Islands finds it regrettable to see those principles sacrificed by some who continue to divide this Assembly. Solomon Islands recognizes the Geneva-based Human Rights Council and its role and impartiality as the appropriate institution to deal with issues of human rights.

This year marks the seventh anniversary of my country's relationship with the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The current partnership framework promotes greater coherence and predictability in enhancing the quality of the cooperation to meet the country's development needs. The relations between Solomon Islands and RAMSI have brought political and financial stability. However, the underlying causes of conflict remain unaddressed. Issues of tolerance and respect for our diverse cultures have placed much stress on our road to peace. My Government remains committed to addressing those issues.

In June this year, the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, brought together Pacific small island developing States and our Middle East brothers to discuss cooperation, including the Arab Peace Initiative in the Middle East. Solomon Islands supports all peace initiatives, including proposals to normalize relations between the entire Arab region and Israel. The complexity of the Middle East conflict needs a regional solution, and we strongly feel that parties to the conflict will need to sow conditions for peace as we work to have a two-State solution. We are heartened to see negotiations proceeding. However, we would like to see all stakeholders involved in the process.

My delegation welcomes the outcome of this summer's Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. The existence of nuclear weapons continues to pose a significant threat to humanity. History has shown the deep horror and devastation of nuclear weapons. Solomon Islands supports the total elimination of all nuclear weapons as the only absolute guarantee for a safe and secure world.

The urgency of agreeing to a legally binding agreement on climate change in Cancún, Mexico, cannot be overemphasized. It is a common concern that binds the world together. Our planet is already absorbing more heat and getting warmer. The global temperature has risen by 0.7°C in the past century. Under current trends, science tells us that the

temperature will further increase by 4 to 7°C by the end of this century, threatening the survival of many States, including Solomon Islands. It is critical that we have a clear plan for stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions. Solomon Islands supports the call of the small island developing States to restrict the temperature rise to below 1.5°C and to bring down greenhouse gas concentration to well below 350 parts per million.

Noting that there is limited atmospheric carbon space left, a carbon-budget approach is an option for a just and fair way to prevent the global temperature from reaching irreversible levels. It takes into consideration the development needs and space concerns of developing countries and our shared responsibilities and rights in meeting the demands of the health of our atmosphere.

On the issue of United Nations system-wide coherence, the General Assembly in July established a new gender entity, UN Women. That body will further strengthen United Nations capacity and effectiveness in advancing the status of women worldwide. Solomon Islands looks forward to cooperating with the new entity.

As regards Security Council reform, my delegation is pleased to see informal intergovernmental negotiations carried forward into this session. Negotiations are now focused on a common text, which we hope will be further streamlined in achieving our goal of making that principal United Nations organ more representative, efficient and responsive to the emerging global threats of this century.

The Pacific Ocean covers a third of the world's surface and accounts for a quarter of the world's tuna industry. In May this year, eight Pacific small island developing States, including Solomon Islands, set up the secretariat of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) in the Marshall Islands. The PNA countries agreed to coordinate the management and conservation of their tuna resources, so as to guarantee sustainability and greater economic benefits from their resources. The closing off of the high seas pockets within the respective countries' exclusive economic zones is to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to provide a safe haven for fish to breed.

On the issue of the establishment of a regional marine scientific centre, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, my delegation is pleased to note that the matter is reflected in the Secretary-General's report. The Pacific subregion values such a centre, which my Government offers to host. We will pursue this regionally and internationally, in the spirit of the Convention and the Mauritius Strategy Initiative.

This year Papua New Guinea, the Federated States of Micronesia and Solomon Islands made a presentation on our joint submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. We hope to do the same with our remaining submissions at an appropriate time.

Solomon Islands is encouraged by the further growth of positive developments and engagements with regard to the Taiwan Strait. That must be internationally recognized, commended and supported. The moderate and pragmatic path adopted by both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan about the Taiwan Strait contributes to international peace and security.

Solomon Islands continues to support Taiwan's meaningful participation within the United Nations system. My delegation is heartened to note Taiwan's participation as an observer at the World Health Assembly in both 2009 and 2010. That is a gesture of the improved cross-Strait relations. Taiwan has registered its interest in participating in two United Nations treaty organizations this year: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Civil Aviation Organization. My country supports such participation. The two organizations deal with two global issues that are of common concern to all the world. Climate change and aviation issues need the participation of all countries for aviation safety and the health of our atmosphere. My delegation finds it regrettable that the UNFCCC secretariat has adopted a narrow position on a matter that requires the parties to the Convention and to the Kyoto Protocol to decide on.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are internationally agreed development benchmarks. The Solomon Islands scorecard remains mixed, uneven and generally off track in terms of meeting our 2015 Goals. The international programme for the Solomon Islands for achieving the MDGs is defined in the Mauritius Strategy and the Brussels Programme of Action. Both frameworks outline the Solomon Islands' special

situation, one that requires special international attention.

The review of the Mauritius Strategy held last week revealed that international commitments to the Barbados Programme of Action remain wanting and disappointing. The vulnerability of small island developing States (SIDS) has worsened. To address this partnership gap, Solomon Islands calls for a special category for SIDS within the United Nations system. There is also a need for a firmer link between the SIDS Programme and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to ensure that support is received from within our Organization.

This session will also see the convening of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in May 2011. We are equally pleased that the General Assembly launched a process of national, regional and global reviews during the last session. We look forward to working with all in achieving a comprehensive, action-oriented and meaningful outcome to the Conference.

Mr. Francisco Carrión-Mena (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My delegation wishes to acknowledge our new partners Luxembourg and Portugal, for their support, respectively, for the Melanesian Spearhead Group and Solomon Islands external students. We remain grateful to all partners from the South and North, including Cuba, Italy, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan and our traditional partners the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and my regional neighbours.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the President of the support and cooperation of the Solomon Islands during his term in office.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Martin (Ireland): Let me begin by warmly congratulating President Joseph Deiss on his election and extending the best wishes of the Irish Government for a successful term in office.

We gather this year against a backdrop of grave challenges confronting the global community. Foremost among them is the continuing crisis of global hunger and poverty. We recognize the obligation upon us to fulfil the commitments made to the world's most vulnerable people when the Assembly adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000. Our Governments have to contend with the most severe global recession in many decades, but we must limit the impact of the crisis on those in greatest need. We must also maintain our commitment to halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

Firmer action is also called for in responding to the threat posed by climate change. If the global community fails to act now on that issue, we will face a steadily escalating threat to our planet and to human survival. In recent months, we have also seen the devastating consequences that natural catastrophes, such as those that have afflicted Pakistan and Haiti, can unleash on vulnerable populations.

As with so many of the challenges and threats to our common security, it is to this great Organization that we instinctively turn in searching for effective collective responses. The universality of its membership gives the United Nations a unique legitimacy and authority. It brings the nations of the world together under a common roof. It provides an invaluable framework for common reflection and decision-making. With the necessary political will, the Member States can use the authority and reach of the United Nations to fashion a more peaceful, equitable and secure world.

One area requiring our close attention is reform of the United Nations itself. To improve the effectiveness of the Organization, we need to ensure that its structures are fit for their purpose and adjusted to twenty-first-century realities. Ireland has actively championed the reform agenda at the United Nations in recent years, and we will continue to do so.

In that regard, I warmly welcome the establishment of UN Women. Ireland is committed to supporting that important new body within the United Nations system, as it promotes greater gender equality and works to enhance the rights and well-being of women worldwide. Also, the benefits to be had from the "delivering as one" programme — greater coherence in United Nations development activities and improved delivery of services at the country level — are clear and tangible. The valuable work done in those areas demonstrates that reform can be achieved when it is clearly shown to be in our collective interest.

We need to do more, however. There is a pressing need for a Security Council that is more properly reflective of twenty-first-century realities and that can function better and with increased transparency. The constructive deliberations on that issue within the informal plenary of the General Assembly should be intensified, with a view to identifying whether there is a model for reform that can command broad consensus.

The system for apportioning the expenses of the Organization should better reflect the principle of capacity to pay. Ireland and its European Union partners have highlighted that issue in recent years, and we will continue to follow it closely. I look forward to positive results from the review of the existing scale methodology that the General Assembly has been mandated to carry out.

Perhaps the greatest challenge we face as a global community is to take effective action to eliminate poverty and hunger. We set ourselves clear targets in adopting the Millennium Development Goals 10 years ago. Here in New York we have reviewed progress over the past week. We have welcomed the remarkable progress that has been generated through our collective action in areas such as education, child health and the treatment of HIV and AIDS. But the reality remains that the actual numbers of people living in poverty and hunger in our world continue to increase.

In recent times, economic crisis and uncertainty have devastated the lives of communities already facing extreme poverty at the same time that they impose pressure on development budgets worldwide. It is therefore imperative that developed and developing countries, in partnership, now examine rigorously which actions have worked in the fight to end poverty and which can be pursued more effectively. We also need to focus more clearly on key sectors.

Since the publication of our Hunger Task Force report two years ago, Ireland has been arguing that a more concerted, comprehensive approach is required to end the continuing crisis of world hunger. The number of chronically hungry people has risen to almost one billion. One in four children in the developing world is undernourished. Failure to address that crisis is undermining progress across the full range of development goals. And yet the means are available, at an affordable cost, to end that scandal. We need to mobilize the political will to do so.

Last week, with the United States Secretary of State, I hosted a meeting of international leaders to build a partnership focusing on nutrition in the first one thousand days of life, from pregnancy to two years of age. We recognized and will give our full support to the Scaling Up Nutrition Initiative of the Secretary General. Our determination to maintain international attention to that issue is driven by the conviction that it is possible in the five years remaining to deliver measurable progress on our commitment to halve the proportion of people suffering from extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

One of the core tasks of this Organization is to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. War and conflict are not merely profoundly destabilizing for the regions in which they occur; they also threaten the collective security of mankind. Mobilizing effective international responses to armed conflict, as and when it occurs, and providing peacekeeping and peacebuilding support in that context are high on the United Nations agenda. In that vitally important area, the United Nations record of accomplishment speaks for itself, as explicitly acknowledged through the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001.

There is one conflict that, more than most, requires the sustained engagement of the international community at the present time. The direct talks under way between Israeli and Palestinian leaders present a historic opportunity to make progress towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. I have no doubt that progress towards a comprehensive settlement based on the two-State solution would contribute more to improving global security than any other single peacebuilding effort.

I want to salute the leadership and commitment demonstrated by President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton and Special Envoy Mitchell in persuading Israel and the Palestinian Authority to resume direct negotiations. While there have been many critical junctures in the Middle East peace process in the past, there can be no doubting the significance of the initiative which is under way at present. It represents what is possibly the final opportunity to achieve a just settlement based on two States living side by side in peace and security.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu are also to be commended for their personal

commitment to this process. I encourage both sides to stay the course and not to be deterred by those who seek to derail the process. In particular, I urge all parties to refrain from any actions which could endanger the negotiation process. It is vital that every effort be made to keep the process intact. Our own experience in the Northern Ireland peace process has shown that political progress can only be achieved through dialogue. Maximum restraint for the duration of these talks, which are intended to be — and should be — completed in 12 months, would be a small price for lasting peace. In this regard, I echo the statement made earlier today by the High Representative of the European Union (EU), Catherine Ashton, regretting the Israeli decision not to extend the moratorium on settlements. There could be no greater single confidence-building measure and practical demonstration of commitment to peace than a decision to desist from all settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

We must not forget Gaza at this critical time. I witnessed for myself the appalling humanitarian plight of the people of Gaza when I visited the region last February. Eighty per cent of them live below the poverty line. The deprivation and hardship that they are suffering because of the blockade are painfully obvious. Yet the people of Gaza show a remarkable dignity and resilience in the face of living conditions which are quite simply unacceptable.

I welcome the steps taken so far to improve the delivery of humanitarian and consumer goods to Gaza. However, the reality remains that much more needs to be done in terms of rebuilding Gaza and allowing normal commercial activity to resume. In particular, exports must be allowed to resume from Gaza; the vital work of recovery and reconstruction, which has been effectively on hold for almost two years, must be facilitated; and key infrastructural projects identified by the United Nations must be allowed to proceed.

I would also urge greater support for the invaluable work performed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and its brave and dedicated staff, on behalf of the Palestinian people. I and others who have visited Gaza in recent months, such as Secretary-General Ban and European Union High Representative Ashton, can testify to the importance of what UNRWA is doing to support the welfare of Gaza's inhabitants and to provide them with some basis for confidence in a better future.

The lack of progress in resolving the differences between the international community and Iran over that country's nuclear programme is a source of great concern. I urge the Iranian authorities to engage constructively on this issue and to comply with the clear requirements set out in numerous Security Council and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolutions, most recently in Security Council resolution 1929 (2010). There is a sincere wish on the part of all of us to negotiate seriously and constructively with Iran on these and other important international issues. I look forward to such a dialogue resuming in the near future.

Any discussion with Iran would also need to include the human rights situation there, about which there continue to be the gravest concerns. Iran must do considerably more than it has done up to now to respect and fulfil the international obligations it has undertaken in the field of human rights. Recent cases of human rights abuses are profoundly disturbing, and Iran must be held fully accountable for them.

The global security which we all wish to achieve depends crucially on the eradication of the means of conflict. Efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament and to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons have been key objectives for the United Nations since its inception. They have also been a major foreign policy priority for successive Irish Governments. Ireland was the first country to sign and ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The successful outcome to last May's NPT Review Conference has reinvigorated the Treaty and is an important milestone on the road towards the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons. A key priority for Ireland is implementation of the action plan on nuclear disarmament agreed there.

I am pleased that Ireland made an important contribution at the Review Conference. In particular, we were able to facilitate progress in relation to implementation of the 1995 resolution on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. I hope that the strong spirit of compromise evident at the Review Conference will be maintained and built upon in the preparations for the 2012 conference on the Middle East resolution.

Ireland is also satisfied with the progress made over the past couple of years on the issue of cluster munitions. The Convention on Cluster Munitions, which was negotiated in Dublin in May 2008, has entered into force as of 1 August this year. This landmark development brings closer the prospect of the elimination of all cluster munitions and of the unacceptable harm to civilians they cause. We must now move ahead with implementation of the Convention and promotion of the widest possible adherence to its provisions.

Ireland is actively supporting preparations for the first meeting of States Parties of the Convention in Vientiane in November. We will continue to show leadership on this issue and to do all we can to ensure the worldwide elimination of these atrocious weapons.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first deployment of Irish troops under the United Nations flag. In 1960, just five years after we joined this Organization, Ireland decided to participate in a peacekeeping mission to what was then the newly independent Congo. This began a long and distinguished tradition of service in United Nations peacekeeping operations in a wide variety of conflict situations around the globe. We will continue to contribute personnel to such missions and to play our part in the maintenance of international peace and security. I welcome the constructive discussions which have taken place within the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on ways of improving the future conduct and management of United Nations peacekeeping missions, following on from Secretary-General Ban's recent paper on the New Horizon Initiative.

This year, Ireland was honoured when our Permanent Representative, Ambassador Anne Anderson, took on the role of co-facilitator, along with South African and Mexican colleagues, of a major review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. We were very pleased to be able to make our contribution to this important and wide-ranging reflection on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, five years after its establishment. The three co-facilitators have submitted a report which aims to revitalize the Commission and give it renewed focus and impact. I look forward to positive consideration by Member States of this report and the recommendations it makes.

Ireland has also been active in relation to another set of issues which have a significant bearing on conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which, for the first time, explicitly acknowledged the key role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We have been working hard to raise international awareness of this resolution and to encourage greater implementation of its provisions by Member States.

As part of our focus on resolution 1325 (2000), we have been pleased to work with Liberia and Timor-Leste in conducting important lessons-learned exercises. A report will be presented to the Secretary-General shortly on the key findings made in this process. We are also working to finalize our national action plan on women, peace and security in the very near future.

Ireland strongly supports the vital role played by the United Nations in upholding and defending human rights around the world. Next year's review of the Human Rights Council provides an opportunity to assess the Council's performance to date and to consider how it might be improved and strengthened. As a candidate for election in 2012, we look forward to making our own contribution to the work of enhancing the Council's performance.

Ireland is also deeply supportive of the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Tribunals in promoting justice and combating impunity. I welcome the successful outcome to the recent Kampala Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, including in relation to defining the crime of aggression, and I urge the fullest cooperation on the part of all Member States with both the ICC and the International Tribunals.

The appalling human tragedy of Darfur continues to challenge the international community. I applaud the courageous efforts of the United Nations personnel and all of the others on the ground in Darfur who are working to provide vital humanitarian services.

We hope that all sides in Sudan will continue to engage in the fullest cooperation in support of the United Nations/African Union mediation efforts in Darfur and also in the preparations for the historic referendum in southern Sudan early next year. Full implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace

Agreement still remains fundamental to securing peace and stability in Sudan as a whole and in the region.

The continuing unjust detention of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma epitomizes the fate of prisoners of conscience everywhere who seek to uphold the values of democracy and free speech. I call for her immediate and unconditional release. I also call for the release of all other political prisoners in Burma and for the launching of a genuine, inclusive national dialogue. And I very much endorse Secretary-General Ban's call on Burma's leaders to create the conditions in which free and fair elections can take place.

In a world where we continue to face enormous peacebuilding challenges, the Northern Ireland peace process is an example of what can be achieved with patience, imagination and strong international support. This year saw a hugely significant step forward in Northern Ireland with the devolution of policing and justice powers to a locally elected Minister accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly. That is a major step towards fulfilling the vision of the Good Friday Agreement, which was signed 12 years ago.

That Agreement provides a genuine possibility for political inclusion for all who reject violence. It is the framework within which the Irish Government, working in partnership and full cooperation with the British Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, is helping to build economic prosperity, assist communities to move beyond conflict and sow the seeds for a shared future for all.

The European Union and its 27 member States are firmly committed to effective multilateralism with a strong United Nations at its core. We look forward to further consultations with the Member States of this Organization on proposed changes to the status of the European Union in the General Assembly. These modest adjustments will help the Union to make a more effective contribution to the work of the Assembly and of the United Nations. A European Union speaking with a clear and coherent voice on the great global challenges that this Organization must address will, I believe, strengthen the impact and effectiveness of the United Nations as a whole. That is something to which Ireland and its EU partners attach the utmost importance.

We live in times of profound and unsettling change and daunting global challenges. As we struggle to deal with these challenges and to chart ways forward in an insecure world, the United Nations is an increasingly valuable resource. It remains the international organization with the greatest potential for international consensus-building and for the framing of collective strategies and solutions. At its heart are the fundamental principles embodied in the United Nations Charter, principles which have underpinned the conduct of international relations over the past 65 years and whose strength and validity is more apparent today than ever before.

Ireland is steadfastly committed to this Organization and the principles and values on which it rests. I very much welcome the General Assembly President's emphasis on the need for a strong, inclusive and open United Nations, and we look forward to taking part in the consultations which he has indicated he will be convening. We look to the United Nations as the indispensable forum for developing effective multilateralism and for leading international endeavours towards the creation of a more peaceful, prosperous and secure world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mamadou Tangara, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad of the Republic of the Gambia.

Mr. Tangara (Gambia): It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to stand here and speak on behalf of the Gambia and the President of the Republic of the Gambia, His Excellency Al Hadji Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh.

First of all, I thank Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, for the opportunity of this moment, as we gather here to deliberate on ways to foster peaceful cooperation and development across the world. On behalf of my delegation and the Government and the people of the Gambia, I wish to thank the General Assembly for the warm welcome my delegation and I have received since our arrival. I also wish to offer deep congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, for his courage and for the outstanding and efficient leadership he demonstrated during the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. We welcome His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss of Switzerland as Mr. Treki's successor as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We would assure Mr. Deiss of the Gambia's support for his presidency. My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-

General for his tireless efforts in leading and managing the affairs of this highly complex Organization. Finally, I convey to all participants the good wishes of the Government and the people of the Republic of the Gambia.

It is clear that the recent upheavals and crises in the global arena have put into sharp focus what the United Nations can and must do as the springboard for coordinating global responses and solutions to global issues. For this reason, the theme that the President has chosen for the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, namely, "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance", is very apt and timely. Any reaffirmation of the pivotal role of the United Nations must start with respect for the purposes and principles of its Charter. In the same vein, the Organization must continue to implement the set of reforms that were introduced at the 2005 World Summit and other related United Nations summits and conferences. Without reform, the United Nations cannot be of relevance in the twenty-first century.

One of the major reforms that we all agreed on is that the size, composition and working methods of the Security Council should be improved. In the absence of action to implement the reform, the legitimacy of the actions of that body will be open to question. Africa's demand for greater representation in all categories of Council membership is rooted in the need for justice and for an end to its marginalization. It is therefore high time to stop consigning Africa to the fate of second-class membership within the United Nations through its perpetual exclusion from the important decision-making that takes place in the Security Council.

For many years, I have called for a greater voice for developing countries in international and financial economic matters, and today I renew that call with a deep sense of urgency. As developing countries, we believe that the Economic and Social Council should be the leading platform for the discussion and formulation of global policies in the economic and social fields.

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remains a major priority of my Government. Through various interventions, policies and programmes, we are poised to achieve and even surpass some of the Goals. However, as we run the last stretch before 2015, the critical need for greater international solidarity and partnership cannot be overemphasized. I am confident that the Gambia will attain all the Goals by 2015, as we are already on course to do so.

We should remind ourselves that the United Nations was created to unify the world, and not to divide it. The Organization should be seen to provide the most potent avenue for allaying fears and restoring hopes and aspirations, fighting for the rights of oppressed and desperate people the world over, and, above all, restraining bullies who seek to skew international politics, growth and development, most often using might and tyranny as weapons.

International criminal law and its institutions have a crucial role to play in global governance and hence the need to avoid selective prosecution and the politicization of court processes. In the world today, there is ample evidence to suggest the existence of the widespread abuse of power, oppression and violation of human rights through illegitimate wars and other forms of excessive intervention. There are times when strong nations attack and trample upon the sovereignty of the weak, while the United Nations and the world watch helplessly, doing nothing, except for a few who raise their voices in isolation.

This will not deter us or discourage us from highlighting the injustices that the International Criminal Court is supposed to set right. If that institution gives way to undue pressure or demonstrates weakness, its cracks may undermine the credibility of the international judicial system.

We know that there are leaders, past and present, who deserve to be dragged into the International Criminal Court for prosecution but they go about their business as if they were above the law. I ask whether this is acceptable.

As a consequence of all this, global governance, from the perspective of the United Nations, has to go beyond political systems aimed at exposing and neutralizing the strategies employed to subdue fragile States. Good governance, as the West prefers to refer to it, needs to permeate the finance structures — of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, for example — in order to render them more effective in offsetting the imbalances created through exploitation, control and protectionism. Indeed, these international financial powerhouses should be transformed into

conduits for mitigating the effects of underdevelopment and poverty the world over.

It is lamentable that the assessment criteria for providing assistance to needy people or nations in distress are tied to political affiliations cloaked in inexplicable, good governance issues.

The Security Council has contributed to the unfair imposition of sanctions that have direct consequences for the lives of civilians. Such measures, often taken to bring down Governments, continue to expose this Organization and the ploys it subtly executes at the behest of powerful nations. We condemn such sanctions and recommend that thorough consultations and sounder procedures precede any sanctions that may have direct, negative impact on innocent lives.

Similarly, we condemn indiscriminate use of banned weapons with impunity while the Security Council does nothing to punish the culprits. Combatants should legitimately engage enemy combatants, and reckless attacks on defenceless people must not be condoned.

There are regional structures in almost every corner of the globe. The United Nations must recognize those structures and work closely with them to quell unrest wherever it erupts. To illustrate this point, let me observe that the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union (AU) have demonstrated ability, if adequately supported, to handle unrest on the African continent. I wish to call on the United Nations to intensify its collaboration with those groupings in crucial State and inter-State interventions.

The African Union and the subregional organizations in Africa have opened up many avenues for cooperation with the United Nations, especially in the area of preventive diplomacy. We would like to see greater support for the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa.

It is an open secret that West Africa is suffering an onslaught of drug traffickers. We are committed to the fight against illegal narcotics, not only in the Gambia, but also in the whole of Africa, as illegal narcotics traffickers are holding some West African States hostage.

The dangers of narcotics transcend boundaries, as they provide a lot of money to dangerous criminals, including terrorists, who have no regard for human life. Given the enormous challenges that lie ahead of us in this battle, our security forces are alert and ready to cooperate with our neighbours and all those who share our concerns. We are determined more than ever to turn West Africa into a living hell for terrorists, drug traffickers as well as organized criminal gangs and human traffickers. This is a battle we must win, and win right.

Let me turn to the phenomenon of Islamophobia. It is important to note that the message of Islam is universal peace and progress, love for humanity and total submission to the will of Allah. History teaches us that Islamic civilization, which has flourished for 1,400 years, has always exhibited its unique capacity for peaceful coexistence, tolerance and compassion among global religions, manifested in the vast expanse of its dominions, cutting across parts of Europe, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, among other regions.

Islamic teachings condemn terrorism in all its manifestations and view such acts as not only savage but also criminal. Islam regards human life as sacred and condemns the killing of innocents. The world, and in particular the West, should therefore be wary of the actions of a small few, including those who abuse the Holy Koran and even threaten to burn it, thereby fuelling tensions and insecurity. Their actions constitute manipulations to judge Islam and its followers in the wrong way. We must not allow bigots, racists and evil entities in the West that are masquerading as nationalists and far right elements to spread a global war of religion. If this were to happen, the entire human race would suffer. Therefore, Western Governments should do more to stop these real terrorists who are on the rampage.

We maintain that the United Nations should play a lead role in combating terrorism through means approved by the General Assembly. Noting that terrorism is a global challenge, no unilateral action based on any form of doctrine should be taken by any nation against another, nor must the United Nations succumb to external pressure from any single nation in pursuit of national gains or interests. Conversely, we support the use of multilateral diplomacy and cooperation to complement internal measures where a particular nation is the target of terrorism.

My delegation's position on the issues raised in this statement is to see to it that the United Nations reviews its governance structures in order to become

more democratic. This would require that the representation quotas for various regions, particularly Africa and Asia, be redefined on the basis of the principles of fair play and justice, and not on the basis of sheer economic or military might.

We recommend that the laws and procedures governing the issue of arrest warrants, prosecution procedures and legal representation at the International Criminal Court also be reviewed objectively, in order to avoid politicization and the selective targeting of individuals.

We also urge that all sovereign States that have a legitimate Government based on the will and consent of their people be admitted to the United Nations, and this applies in particular to the Republic of China on Taiwan. We commend the countries on both sides of the Strait for their continuous progress in pursuing peace and shelving disputes over the past two years. While both States deserve special recognition and more encouragement, the United Nations also needs to be cognizant of the efforts by Taiwan in this peaceful process. It is important to note that Taiwan's invitation to participate in the World Health Assembly as an observer in 2009 and 2010 not only enhanced international health and medical care networks, but also set a positive example for Taiwan's participation. We therefore urge all Member States to ensure that other specialized agencies are opened up to Taiwan's meaningful participation in the work of the United Nations.

Taiwan is contributing immensely to the international community through trade, investment, air transport, finance, telecommunications technology and environmental protection in the spirit of international cooperation. Therefore, we call upon the United Nations to find a proper way to accept Taiwan's participation in all its specialized agencies, notably the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The international community needs to recognize that Taiwan has adopted and pursued a pragmatic, moderate and steady foreign policy, and we therefore encourage United Nations specialized agencies to be open-minded with regard to Taiwan's participation in their activities. It is our collective responsibility to enable the 23 million people of Taiwan to participate more visibly and make them able to function within the international system.

The United States embargo against Cuba is one of the longest running political disputes that this Assembly has needed to address for almost two decades. It is embarrassing that such a cruel and outmoded form of settling scores in international relations is still in place. The embargo has no legitimacy or appeal, and it is time for those that imposed it to show genuine leadership by ending it.

It is worth noting that the development of the African Union has shown that African leadership on African issues is the key to finding solutions to the problems that continue to plague the continent. From climate change to the undemocratic change of Governments, from peacekeeping to peacemaking, from development to regional integration, Africa has shown that it is ready to chart its destiny with dignity. That is what we are committed to, and all we ask of the international community is fulfilment of the pledges made to Africa. We are willing to cooperate with those that are willing to do so respecting the dignity of our countries, without humiliating conditionalities.

The Gambia's commitment to peace and stability across Africa has been manifested not only in troop contributions, but also in our readiness at all times to find peaceful solutions to conflicts plaguing the African continent. We call on the international community to lend its full support to the efforts of the African Union and the United Nations to consolidate peace and stability across the Sudan.

As for Somalia, we recognize the need to empower the Government of Somalia, so that it can assert its authority over its territory, achieve lasting peace and, thus, address the problem of piracy. Supporting one faction against another is not a worthy solution to the Somali problem.

A major development in the evolution of the United Nations this year has been the creation of UN Women. As a firm believer in gender equality and women's empowerment, my Government will do all in its power to support that entity. We wish the new board well and urge them to assign centre stage to gender issues and policies without politics.

Finally, we believe that there is no substitute for the United Nations, a body whose role in global governance we consider critical. The missing link has

been the absence of a global governance framework to embrace universality and representation.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Manuel Salvador dos Ramos, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

Mr. Salvador dos Ramos (Sao Tome and Principe) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Allow me to convey to the President and to this noble Assembly the greetings of His Excellency Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, who cannot attend this meeting for scheduling reasons. Since this is his last term as President on constitutional grounds, President de Menezes would have much liked to participate in this sixty-fifth session in order to personally express his sincere and heartfelt thanks for the support and cooperation of our Organization provided to him during the period of his presidency.

On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, which I have the honour to lead, I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his election to chair this sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. His election is proof that the Member countries of this Organization recognize the contribution that he and his country, Switzerland, have made to the cause of peace and to upholding the noble ideals of freedom, democracy and human rights in the world. We are therefore convinced that he will guide our work with dexterity, clarity and success. We also congratulate him for the relevance of the theme "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance", which merits the attention of all present here on account of its timeliness.

We salute the very distinguished Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the efforts, dedication and skill with which he has guided our Organization, despite the enormous political, economic and social challenges that the world is facing, in particular with regard to the issues of peace, international security, underdevelopment, extreme poverty, climate change, food security and the continuation of some regional conflicts. It is our deep conviction that, in order to collectively face such challenges, we must reaffirm and strengthen our confidence in the role of the United Nations in promoting peace and justice in the world.

The defence of multilateralism is of vital importance in seeking solutions based on the principles of the United Nations Charter. The role of the United Nations in preventing and resolving conflicts, promoting peace and supporting development should be bolstered. In that regard, it is vital to strengthen the role of the United Nations, including reforming the system and the Security Council, in order to provide responses that are more consistent with the challenges facing humanity today.

We echo the concerns expressed in this Assembly Hall by the President of Malawi and Chairperson of the African Union in that regard. The consensus to date on the question of Western Sahara leads us to urge the parties involved to continue on the path of dialogue in pursuit of a peaceful settlement of that conflict.

Our global security is vital to the sustainable development of our countries. The international community must be cautious and aware of the risks that the Palestinian conflict could spread and endanger the entire Middle East region and ultimately international peace and security in the larger world.

Sao Tome and Principe welcomes the resumption of the dialogue on the Palestine question and encourages the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to continue on that course in the hope that the peoples of Israel and Palestine will live side by side in peace in the future. My country would also like to acknowledge and welcome the personal commitment of President Barack Obama to finding a permanent solution to that conflict.

The world faces other risks, such as transnational crime, piracy and drug trafficking. For us, a small country surrounded by a vast expanse of sea, that is a significant reason for concern. Sao Tome and Principe will therefore continue to pay particular attention to the regional integration organizations to which we belong, as well as to give priority to conflict-prevention, -management and -resolution mechanisms in order to ensure security and peace in Central Africa.

The profound changes taking place in international politics, which are the result of structural changes in the global economy and have important geopolitical implications, have been affecting Sao Tome and Principe in various ways. As a small island

State, Sao Tome and Principe therefore calls for greater access to various economic opportunities, in particular official development assistance and international investment. Moreover, we support the conclusion of a new international trade agreement on a more equitable and fairer basis, as well as the conclusion of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

We welcome the appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, to oversee matters relating to women and gender with a view to promoting their participation in global challenges.

At the Millennium Summit in 2000, world leaders committed themselves to creating an environment conducive to development and the eradication of poverty, both nationally and internationally. The adoption of the Millennium Declaration was followed by other international conferences, which, although they reaffirmed the commitment of both the donor community and the countries receiving aid to seek innovative funding sources and alternatives, did not have the desired effect of alleviating world poverty levels. However, it is vital that we create a new spirit of partnership and a better concept of cooperation for development. To that end, there is a need for additional efforts in the area of official development assistance.

The High-level Meeting that has just taken place here in New York is proof of our concern about the benchmarks to be achieved for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. For our part, the results in the area of education and health are fairly encouraging, particularly when it comes to reducing child mortality and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

With regard to education for all, our net enrolment rate in the first cycle of primary education — for children aged one to four — is estimated at 98 per cent. Literacy rates in the 15 to 24 age group are high as compared to most African countries, namely, 96 per cent for females and 95 per cent for males.

The results in reducing child mortality have been equally encouraging. In 2009, we recorded 38 deaths per 1,000 live births. That is a significant reduction compared with past years. For example, there were 61 per 1,000 live births in 2002. The mortality rate for children under five fell from 138 to 101 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2002, further dropping to 63 in 2009. The number of children immunized against measles has increased substantially, with 84 per cent vaccinated in 2009 as compared to 70 per cent in 2000.

With regard to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, it is still contained but can spread rapidly. The prevalence rate in the 15 to 24 year age range is 0.7 per cent, but among the total population aged 15 to 49 it is 1.5 per cent. The prevalence rate of malaria has been reduced dramatically, from 478 cases per 1,000 inhabitants in 2002 to about 34 cases in 2009.

It is true that our country has made significant progress in the areas I have mentioned, but we are aware that much more remains to be done in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Sao Tome and Principe believes that it is our collective responsibility to take measures to address the adverse effects of climate change, although we welcome the political willingness of Member States to continue the process of building the necessary consensus on the various themes discussed at the Copenhagen Summit. We recognize the efforts made at the recent meeting held in Bonn, as well as the prospects for the opening meeting to be held in Mexico.

Sao Tome and Principe expresses its concern at attempts to use nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes. We hope that those who utilize nuclear energy do so in accordance with existing mechanisms for international regulation and supervision.

Climate change has caused imbalances in the microclimate of our country, with dramatic impact on our domestic production. That poses a threat to the food security of Sao Tome and Principe. The authorities of my country would therefore like to continue to count on the invaluable support and willingness so far expressed by the international community, in general, and in particular by specialized bodies of the United Nations.

I would be remiss if I concluded my statement without addressing the situation along the Taiwan Strait. We recognize the efforts made by both sides along the Strait aimed at reducing political tension and creating a favourable climate that is conducive to peace, security and development in the region. Despite those positive developments — including the signing of an economic treaty regulating trade relations between the two sides, opening up airspace to commercial traffic and promoting stronger links

between the two peoples — there are still some aspects that must be addressed in order to allow greater involvement by Taiwan in the international community.

We call on Members of the United Nations, and in particular its specialized agencies, to find ways to make possible Taiwan's greater participation in specialized agencies and other bodies and machinery, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We believe that Taiwan's participation in those two forums will strengthen both those mechanisms and better serve our common interests.

In consolidating its democratic process, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe has just conducted yet another elections process, from which a new Government and Assembly have emerged. The new Government, whose programme has just been approved by the National Assembly, has identified four key areas for attention, namely, good governance, credibility and combating corruption; economic growth; national cohesion and organization; and State authority. To achieve those objectives, the Government of Sao Tome and Principe would very much like to count on the continued support of the international community.

We believe that the international community, and in particular the United Nations system, knows how to respond to the new challenges of a changing world by seeking out mechanisms, instruments and policies aimed at promoting international cooperation, innovative partnerships and international solidarity. In that collective effort, I want to reaffirm that Sao Tome and Principe is ready and willing to make its contribution to the realization of the noble principles and objectives that were at the heart of the creation of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency General Antoine Gambi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration, and of the Francophonie of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Gambi (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): The Central African Republic would like, through me, to commend Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We congratulate him and offer him our support in fulfilling his great responsibility. His predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, also deserves our heartfelt commendation and gratitude for the outstanding contribution he made during his term of office in revitalizing the General Assembly. Lastly, on behalf of His Excellency Army General François Bozizé, President and Head of State of our country, allow me to convey our sincere congratulations to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has been tireless in carrying out his extremely important role to promote the ideals of the Organization.

The sixty-fifth session is taking place at a time when the world faces many challenges. In addition to the armed conflicts that affect almost every continent, there are also the food, energy and financial crises, which have made the lives of the most vulnerable people increasingly precarious. There are also challenges when it comes to respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance, which are the foundations of lasting peace and security and a healthy environment. Today, we are aware that systematic violations of human rights and the glaring absence of the rule of law are often the root causes of conflicts and other social crises. States and non-State actors confront each other. Warlords, terrorists and criminal gangs dictate their own rules. Civilians, rather than soldiers, become the first targets. Security policy can no longer be confined to the traditional framework of the State; it must be focused first and foremost on the security of individuals.

As the President rightly said in his opening speech to this session of the General Assembly by way of referring to the special theme for the sixty-fifth session, "we must reinstate the United Nations and the General Assembly at the centre of global governance. The challenges we face today have acquired a global dimension and require global solutions." (*A/65/PV.1*)

The Central African Republic continues to believe that preventing and peacefully resolving conflicts are the best way to maintain international peace and security. Many other challenges also require the attention of the international community. We should provide responses tailored to those challenges in order that together we can build a better world, starting with the issue of climate change.

Today more than ever before, the survival of the planet is threatened by changes to the climate that have a serious impact on living conditions in developing countries — owing mainly to desertification, the silting

up of rivers, ecosystem deterioration, shortened winters and floods. Faced with that danger, it is not a matter of raising questions about respective responsibilities; we must rather, first and foremost, put in place suitable emergency measures to confront the challenge.

In that connection, the outcomes of the Bali Conference are as relevant as ever and they should be implemented. Although, unfortunately, the Copenhagen summit was the scene of selfishness and inconsistency on the part of States vis-à-vis international cooperation and climate policy, we hope that the upcoming meeting at Cancún, Mexico, will find appropriate answers to those worrying issues.

The HIV/AIDS and malaria pandemics are another challenge to which we must give particular attention, as they pose a serious threat to the survival of humankind, in particular on the African continent. With regard to HIV/AIDS, we must truly redouble our efforts and determination to implement the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the outcomes of the high-level meetings on AIDS. Child and maternal mortality rates in Africa, whose increase is yet another cause for concern, should also enjoy the same attention as the other issues. All of those meetings have emphasized the gravity of the situation, underscoring the importance of acting and the need to mobilize resources accordingly to fight those health threats.

Achieving Millennium Development Goal 1 on time — namely, reducing by half the number of people who suffer from hunger by 2015 — compels us to put in place a new approach and policy towards international cooperation that is based on support for agriculture, rather than on providing food assistance, which should only be provided in exceptional circumstances, and then in a timely manner.

Developing agriculture in Africa so that it provides for lasting food security also necessarily entails controlling water, the availability of equipment, access to raw materials for producers and proper organization of the means of producing, storing, transforming and marketing agricultural products. The Central African Republic, a country endowed with abundant natural resources, would easily be able to take its place as an agricultural country, were it not for the handicaps it faces owing to its landlocked status and the scarcity of means at its disposal.

Agriculture in my country is essentially a subsistence affair that performs poorly despite the country's enormous potential. That includes 15 million arable hectares, of which only 600,000 are cultivated annually, as well as 16 million hectares of range land for a herd of 2 million animals. We also have at our disposal a vast network of rivers and streams, as well as abundant rainfall amounting to 1,200 to 1,800 millimetres per year. Agriculture employs more than 75 per cent of working people in our country, contributing about 53 per cent of our gross domestic product.

In the Central African Republic, about 72 per cent of the poor and hungry live in rural areas, where agriculture plays a crucial role, feeding communities but providing employment that offers only meagre incomes. Nevertheless, in spite of the enormity of the need and the growing food insecurity, assistance to agriculture continues to decrease, having dropped significantly in the past 20 years.

The Central African Republic has maintained the strengthening of human capital as one of its priorities under the fourth pillar of its national poverty-reduction strategy. Under that pillar, education, health and employment are considered priority sectors, in line with the Millennium Development Goals. Assessments of the programmes that have been launched seem to reveal shortcomings in the results. For instance, adult literacy rates are poor, at 57 per cent, while the overall primary school attendance rate is also low, at 55 per cent.

The Central African Republic is among the countries of the world most affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, even though we are continuing efforts to bring its prevalence under control.

Given those outcomes, it is clear that, if our country is to pursue the implementation of the priorities of our development plan, we need significant support from our development partners.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, the proliferation crisis we are experiencing constitutes the greatest threat to international peace and security today. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation in all their aspects should be at the centre of our debate. We should resolve to prioritize the use of nuclear energy for peaceful civilian purposes.

Today more than ever before, the interconnectedness of the crises faced by the

international community underscores the need to inject new impetus into efforts to achieve international peace and security, including collective efforts at the international level.

With regard to reforming the United Nations system, the Central African Republic shares the view that the current system no longer reflects the ambitions of the founders. Our country therefore once again calls for full representation for Africa in the system's decision-making bodies, in particular the Security Council. Whatever the outcome of the ongoing negotiations on this matter, my delegation continues to believe that any viable reform of the Security Council must take into account Africa's numerical and political significance in the General Assembly, especially given the two types of situations considered by the Council.

The Central African Republic held elections in 2005, which were heralded by the international community for having met all the necessary standards. It should be pointed out that those held in 2010 experienced various difficulties that need to be examined. Therefore, on the basis of a political consensus, the National Assembly adopted a law based on a constitutional court opinion. This constitutional arrangement extends the term of office of our country's President, as well as those of members of the Assembly, until the holding of elections, now set for 23 January 2011.

In another area, the programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants has made considerable progress in the central and north-western parts of our country. Nevertheless, the Central African Republic continues to face security problems in the north-east of the country, as a result of the consequences of the conflict in Darfur, as well as in the south-east, owing to the raging Ugandan rebellion by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

This alarming situation has resulted in a growing number of refugees and internally displaced persons from various areas, who have fled to the cities from the fighting. Having been pushed out of Uganda, LRA rebels have regrouped in the south-east of our country, where they carry out all sorts of violence and spread terror among the people. It is important to point out that the Central African Republic does not have any borders with Uganda.

The Central African Republic therefore welcomes the decision by the United States Government with regard to disarming the LRA. Nevertheless, we hope that the United States Administration will focus in particular on the case of the Central African Republic, which is a post-conflict country that still needs United States assistance, given the danger posed by the LRA on the ground in our country and the disastrous social consequences it has already had.

The President returned to the Chair.

The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, whose mandate will expire on 31 December 2010, requires particular attention. The Central African Republic's defence and security forces will take over from international forces in order to ensure the continuity of operations. However, they are in desperate need of military equipment and supplies. The Government of the Central African Republic therefore appeals to the international community for assistance in strengthening the operational capacities of our armed forces.

I cannot conclude without once again thanking all those whose commitment, courage and determination continue to be of assistance in helping my country to emerge from crisis to lasting peace and development.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam.

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. I also thank Mr. Treki, the outgoing President, for his strong leadership in support of United Nations reform.

I would also like to express our great sympathy to the Government and people of Pakistan and to our fellow United Nations Members whose people have suffered the terrible effects of natural disasters over the past year. I also thank the Secretary-General and his staff for coordinating international relief efforts.

We have had a long week of formal meetings and sideline discussions, and there is still much more to be done before we all go home. So, at this time, I would like to be brief and offer a statement of support for what our people regard as the most important aspect of the work of the United Nations. By this I mean the work of our United Nations agencies, their experts,

their advisers and above all their volunteers in the field.

I think the theme for this year's debate underlines the importance of their work. It asks us to recognize the central role of the United Nations in global governance and I have no difficulty in doing this. Achieving security, progress and development is, of course, our own individual responsibility. But as last week's high-level discussions on the Millennium Development Goals made extremely clear, many of the challenges we face reach beyond single nations and even single regions. They are international in the full sense of the word.

So we need help, experience and expertise and for me, this is what the United Nations agencies offer. As we all know, their support continues all year, every year. In my own country it is taking place right now as we speak, through the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Health Organization and we are most grateful for their help. They work in vital areas of national development, education, health, agriculture, communications and infrastructure. They meet with people directly, they listen, they discuss, and they teach, train and encourage. They work closely with our local authorities and sometimes they do even more than that.

I think that we learned this during last year's influenza A (H1N1) health crisis. As the Assembly can imagine, for a small nation like ours this was very serious indeed. It could have almost closed us down and could have certainly caused widespread panic. But it did not. I think this was very largely due to one fact: our people knew that they were not alone. They had the guidelines given to us by the World Health Organization and this gave them the confidence they needed during that extremely worrying time; we could not have made it without them.

Returning to our theme this year: it invites us to reaffirm and, as I have said, I am happy to do this and I do it without reservation. I reaffirm our respect and deep appreciation for the work of all United Nations agencies. We are delighted to be working with them and we warmly congratulate the Secretary-General on their work.

In the words of our theme, the United Nations does indeed play a central role. In my view, without its agencies the concept of global governance can only be, at best, an idea and, most of the time, only words. It is the agencies that help us turn ideas into real substance and to change words into actions that our people understand, respect and welcome.

In fact, I would like to end by saying that they are much more than agencies. For countries such as ours, they can help us to become far more than small developing nations. I think this can be summed up simply: they make us part of a United Nations that is truly united.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Oldemiro Marques Balói, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique.

Mr. Balói (Mozambique): Mozambique associates itself with previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your unanimous election to preside over the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Indeed we feel confident that your wisdom and diligence will provide positive leadership and success for our deliberations. We reaffirm our commitment to support your presidency and pledge to fully cooperate with you and all the other members of the Bureau in the discharge of your noble mission.

We wish to express our gratitude to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, for his commitment to our Organization and for his strong leadership in carrying out the work of the United Nations, both productively and effectively during the previous General Assembly session.

Equally, I would like to commend the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, for his engagement in promoting peace and justice and, in particular, for his tireless efforts to mobilize the United Nations family to adequately address the global challenges facing the world and humanity through concerted multilateral approaches.

Recognizing the steering role of the United Nations in global governance and highly appreciating the wise choice of reflecting this important and timely item during the present debate, I request your indulgence to seize this opportunity to share some information about developments in Mozambique. As we move steadily towards strengthening the democratic institutions in Mozambique, we are proud to see that

there have been significant achievements in both the political and the socio-economic spheres of the country.

Indeed, thanks to the strengthened political stability that Mozambique currently enjoys, the Government is undertaking a comprehensive public sector reform and decentralization process in the area of public administration. Similarly, political and social stability and good macroeconomic management, supplemented by the attractive investment legislation already in place, have contributed immensely to creating conditions conducive to promoting economic growth and sustainable development.

Our main goal is to eradicate poverty, as it is one of the major challenges facing our people in their efforts to improve their living conditions. We are fully aware that in fighting poverty we need also to simultaneously address other related challenges, namely, climate change, the energy crisis, food insecurity and the global economic and financial crisis, whose impacts constitute an enduring challenge, especially for developing economies such as that of Mozambique. All those challenges are interrelated and have multiplier effects on our competitiveness and growth efforts.

The threats posed by the negative impact of climate change on our environment need to be continuously dealt with as a priority and should be comprehensively addressed at the national, subregional, regional and international levels. The devastation due to problems originating in climate change is degrading our environment at an astonishing pace. In fact, Mozambique and many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa are being ravaged by cyclical natural disasters that destroy major arable lands and thus reduce land productivity.

There is no doubt that small island developing countries face the risk of disappearing from the world map. At the same time, it is also important to recognize the plight of coastal developing countries like Mozambique, which are suffering from the rise in sea levels.

The heavy burden resulting from the adverse effects of climate change constrains the ability of our Governments to allocate the necessary financial and human resources to decisively address problems related to the environment. Hence, developing countries, particularly sub-Saharan countries, do not have the required financial resources to undertake the necessary steps to mitigate the impact of climate change. To that end, we are committed to continue working in a concerted manner with international development partners, especially the United Nations and other stakeholders with a focus on creating conditions for adaptation and local community resilience to the impact of climate change.

Bearing in mind the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, we would like to underline that our association with the Copenhagen Accord on climate change is based precisely on our understanding that the global nature of climate change demands a true multilateral response. In that regard, we look forward to a successful outcome of the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — COP 16 — to be held in Cancún later this year. We commend the active role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to ensure a meaningful result of the climate change negotiations.

In addressing all the aforementioned challenges, strong and able global governance is of utmost importance to ensure the spurring of the political will needed for concrete actions. The United Nations is the only intergovernmental organization with a universal character and the ability to mobilize such a capacity. That is why we believe that concrete steps to strengthen the central role of the United Nations in global governance are required, through providing it with the adequate resources and authority commensurate with its global responsibility to fully respond to the growing global needs.

Mozambique will remain engaged in the ongoing process of reforming the United Nations to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness, to increase its credibility and legitimacy as a representative of the people of the world.

In that regard, the revitalization of the role and the authority of the General Assembly as the most representative and legitimate organ of the United Nations cannot be overemphasized. It is here where everyone is represented and every vote counts in deciding on matters of common interest. So it is here where all the most important decisions should be taken — from issues related to the maintenance of peace and security, the promotion of economic cooperation and social and humanitarian matters to the promotion of human rights.

Everyone should abide by and implement all decisions and resolutions taken here. Therefore, we need a strong General Assembly, well resourced and with the necessary authority to assume its responsibilities on behalf of the international community.

Another important track of reform that we are very much attached to is the reform of the Security Council. Although there is no agreement yet on the level of attainment, we all agree that reform of the Council should be a priority in the whole United Nations reform process. It is clear that we need a more balanced representation in the Council. Moreover, we are of the view that a Council that is more fair and democratic in its decisions and actions would adequately meet the security necessities of the international community.

For a meaningful reform of the Security Council, it is imperative that the historic injustice with regard to the African continent be corrected. Indeed, today it is no longer acceptable that a continent that represents almost 30 per cent of the whole United Nations membership and whose concerns constitute more than 60 per cent of the Council's agenda is not represented in the category of permanent member. In that light, Africa deserves to be allocated permanent seats in any Security Council reform, based on the Ezulwini Consensus.

There is also a need for a more coherent and effective United Nations system, capable of efficiently addressing and advancing durable solutions for the pressing economic, social and humanitarian problems currently facing the world. Member States should also continue to discuss and find measurable solutions on how to ensure coherence between policy decisions and the implementation of commitments agreed in United Nations international conferences and summits in the field of development.

In that regard, Mozambique is proud of the progress made by the General Assembly on system-wide coherence. In particular, we commend the Assembly for its recent major step in the establishment of UN Women. I seize this opportunity to reiterate our congratulations to Her Excellency Ms. Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as Under-Secretary-General of the new entity and pledge our full support for and readiness to collaborate on the successful accomplishment of the task of bringing gender equality and the empowerment of women to the forefront of the United Nations work.

It is also a fact that, although we are open to seeing the result of the independent evaluation of the One United Nations pilot country initiative, it is our strong belief that the progress made so far in the implementation of that initiative is extremely encouraging. Therefore we call on the United Nations to support all countries that voluntarily decide to embark on the process of making the United Nations system work in a more coherent manner at the country level.

With regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, Mozambique is committed to continuing to share its experience in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, particularly in southern Africa. In our subregion, we share important responsibilities in the promotion of peace and security, as well as with regard to regional integration as part of subregional and regional efforts to promote international peace and security and sustainable development.

We advocate international peace and security because we truly believe that they are part of the enabling conditions that allow countries to concentrate their attention on dealing with other pressing needs, such as the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, the fight against international crime and drug trafficking, addressing poverty-related problems and the promotion of sustainable development.

It is worth noting that the political situation and stability in Southern Africa have improved. Indeed, the process of implementing the Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe has made significant strides. We also remain committed, under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community, to finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Madagascar.

We are encouraged by the progress being made in stabilizing the political situation in Guinea-Bissau, especially the ongoing reform of the armed forces and the public administration. I take this opportunity to call on the international community to continue supporting the ongoing efforts of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and of the United Nations to find a sustainable and lasting peace in that sister country.

Mozambique reiterates its support for the efforts of the international community to find a lasting

solution to the problem of Western Sahara, and for the right of that country's people to self-determination.

Mozambique is concerned that despite all continued international efforts, it has not been possible to bring about peace and stability in the Middle East. Mozambique is deeply concerned about the volatile situation in that region, where the conflict between Israel and Palestine continues to deprive the Palestinian people of the realization of their fundamental human rights, including the right to their own land and resources and to live in peace with all neighbouring countries, including, obviously, Israel.

We need a strong United Nations that can play a central role in mobilizing Member States and the international community at large to commit and fully contribute to regional and international peace and security and to an enabling environment for the promotion of sustainable development.

That is why we believe in multilateralism. We reiterate our commitment to work in collaboration with all States Members of the Organization in the pursuit of our common goals to make the world a better place for all humanity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Bhim Bahadur Rawal, Minister for Home Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

Mr. Rawal (Nepal): I wish to extend our sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I also thank the President at the sixty-fourth session for his excellent stewardship of that session. His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, deserves our sincere appreciation for his commitment and dedication.

The message of the High-level Plenary Meeting of last week is still reverberating around this Assembly: the continuing poverty and hunger in today's world, where we have made great strides in all our endeavours, is unacceptable and must be brought to an end without delay. It is quite disheartening to note that the number of poor has surpassed one billion and that they are concentrated in certain regions and groups of countries, mostly in least developed countries (LDCs).

The commitments expressed by the leaders attending the High-level Plenary Meeting last week rekindled our hope that it will be a different world in 2015. Otherwise, the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and many other vital documents will remain only a compilation of lofty promises. Let us hope that we match our commitments with our deeds.

International peace and security are our shared desire and a common responsibility. The challenges are multiple and complex. In an ever-changing world, the sources and the threats are varied, and so are the actors. Political and social conflicts have been aggravated by abject poverty and disparity. Therefore, the stabilization of global peace and security also demands ensuring freedom from want and hunger as a basic human right and enabling people to realize their full human potential. Thus we believe that development, peace and security are inextricably linked with one other.

Nepal has consistently and unequivocally called for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, under effective international control. Nepal stands for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner. The operationalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the early conclusion of a fissile materials cut-off treaty should be our priority. We support efforts for the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

We welcome the signing in April this year of the New START treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on strategic offensive arms. We welcome the successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, we call for reinvigorating the Conference on Disarmament as a multilateral body, to start discussions on substantive issues. We also appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General to advance nuclear disarmament on the basis of the five-point action plan he has proposed.

Nepal strongly believes that regional mechanisms complement efforts to promote the global disarmament agenda. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which we are proud to host, must be strengthened in order to revitalize the Kathmandu process to facilitate dialogue and deliberations on confidence-building in the region.

In today's world, devastating conflicts are a constant threat to international security. Despite progress on many fronts, violence and civil wars

continue unabated. It is a matter of concern that intra-State conflicts and extremism have steadily grown over the years. We should work collectively. In accordance with the principles and Charter of the United Nations, we should all contribute to resolving such conflicts through peaceful means and should help stabilize situations through peacebuilding efforts.

In the Middle East, we are encouraged by the recent direct dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians. We look forward to the success of the dialogue leading towards an independent Palestinian State alongside a secure Israel. We would like to see a peaceful resolution to disputes in the Korean peninsula through dialogue.

Terrorism is a threat to all and knows no geographical boundary. We unequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and call for resolute international actions to fight it. Nepal has been implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and is party to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism of 1987 and its Additional Protocol.

Legitimacy, universality and common ideals have been the defining features of the United Nations. Continued adherence to its core principles and purposes will reinforce sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The inspiring values and the lofty ideals that underpin the United Nations Charter remain as relevant as ever.

We live in an era of continuous change. The economic landscape is also changing with the emergence of new, yet vibrant, poles of growth. Globalization has changed the pattern of economic relations, although its benefits are not widely and equitably distributed.

The effectiveness of the United Nations depends on our collective will to act and to deal with global issues resolutely. In the face of new and emerging challenges, it is urgent that the ideals of the United Nations be translated into action effectively and in a coherent manner. The theme of this year's general debate — "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" — captures that essence.

We underline the centrality of the United Nations not only in maintaining peace and security, but also in promoting international cooperation for development. Its role in shaping policy debate on and establishing global norms for economic and financial matters must not be sidelined. The reform agenda needs to strike the right balance to promote stability in the broadest sense. Just as security and peace are critical for the international community, so is the development agenda. It must be given a focused priority within the United Nations system.

United Nations reform should be pursued in a systematic and holistic manner to further enhance the Organization's global standing.

The realities of the contemporary world call for a change in the composition and working methods of the Security Council. We support the expansion of membership in the Council in both categories to reflect the current realities of the world. We also call for transparency in its working methods. We welcome recent efforts to structure the debates with a view to starting negotiations by taking into account the views of all Member States.

We welcome the ongoing discussions on the revitalization of the General Assembly in the context of the balance between the various organs of the United Nations, as envisioned by the founders. The role of the Economic and Social Council must be enhanced in promoting global economic relations and in advancing the development agenda, in close cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant institutions. The Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review are a welcome change in that body.

We need to make the United Nations more effective in ensuring coherence and consistency in the global economic, financial and trading systems. We call for special support for counter-cyclical measures, social safety nets to protect the vulnerable, and fiscal space to mitigate the crisis. We should make all these steps particularly responsive to the needs and concerns of vulnerable countries, such as LDCs.

Nepal welcomes the adoption of the resolution on system-wide coherence by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, with a view to strengthening and streamlining the operational activities of the United Nations in the field of development (resolution 64/289). We also welcome and strongly support the

establishment of UN Women as a single consolidated entity to deal with issues pertaining to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Global peace and stability are our cherished goal. Guided by that principled objective, Nepal has extended unflinching support to all major United Nations initiatives for the maintenance of international peace and security through its active and consistent participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world. In 2008, we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of our association with United Nations peacekeeping operations with a view to further consolidating our contributions to the cause of international peace and security. Today, more than 5,000 Nepalese peacekeepers work in 13 different peacekeeping missions around the world. Nepal's involvement in United Nations peacekeeping missions has been one of the remarkable features of its international engagement. We continue to participate with dedication.

In line with our solemn commitment to the United Nations Charter and our contribution to promoting its ideals, I have the pleasure of announcing at this Assembly that the Government of Nepal has put forward the candidacy of Mr. Kul Chandra Gautam, adviser to the Prime Minister of Nepal on the peace process and international affairs, for the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

The gradual increase in the number of peacekeeping missions is an indicator of the sombre fact that the number of conflicts around the world has increased in recent years. The sustainable way to resolve conflicts is to look at them comprehensively and remove the factors that generate and sustain them.

Nepal's commitment to human rights is resolute. We are party to major international human rights instruments. We are fully aware that the protection and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms strengthen the sustainability of peace and progress. The National Human Rights Commission, an independent judiciary, a vibrant civil society and the media have all played an important role in promoting awareness and protecting human rights in Nepal.

Our fellow South Asian country Pakistan recently suffered tragic loss of lives and destruction due to unprecedented floods. Similarly, fellow LDC Haiti faced a devastating earthquake. Those disasters have wiped out hard-earned gains, and therefore we call for full sympathy and support to them in their hour of need.

Climate change has become a challenge to human existence, a multidimensional threat to human lives and all living things, the global ecosystem and human civilization. It has a direct impact on our efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger and to preserve the ecological balance.

My country, which is a least developed landlocked country with mountainous terrain, is highly vulnerable to climate change. The Himalayas remain the perennial source of freshwater for over a billion people living in South Asia. Global warming has precipitated the melting of snow in the Nepalese Himalayas, and about two dozen of our glacial lakes could burst their banks any time, causing a huge loss of lives and property. Moreover, we face extreme weather events, floods, soil degradation and desertification. Because of their fragility, mountain countries face special vulnerability to climate change.

Countries like Nepal contribute the least to climate change, yet we bear a disproportionate impact, and it is the poor and vulnerable people among us who face its severe effects. We cannot wait for action forever. At the national level, we are pursuing afforestation programmes and promoting the use of alternative sources of energy, as well as hydropower generation.

There is an urgent need to make progress on climate negotiations through an ambitious and comprehensive outcome in Cancún, Mexico, later this year. The international community should agree on new, predictable, transparent and substantially enhanced resource mobilization and a fast-track provision to ensure resources for mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer, reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation — REDD-Plus — and capacity-building in the least developed countries. LDCs must be given priority so that they may withstand the sweeping impact of climate change on their people's livelihoods.

International responses to the special needs and concerns of LDCs have had limited success. The implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action has produced mixed results. The overall performance of LDCs in the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals stands well below their expectations, despite some progress.

That is primarily because we continue to face structural handicaps and constraints, as well as a critical resource gap in our development efforts.

Mutually reinforcing and exacerbating food, energy, economic and financial crises, together with the adverse and disproportionate impacts of climate change, have further worsened the conditions of LDCs. Limited economic activity, stagnant growth, the early stage of industrialization, heavy reliance on subsistence agriculture as the mainstay of the national economy and a lack of employment opportunities in other sectors have made poor countries highly vulnerable to external shocks.

Such challenges cannot be overcome without a renewed and scaled-up global partnership for development. The fulfilment of all commitments to official development assistance in a predictable, transparent and accountable manner, the enhanced provision of duty- and quota-free market access for all LDCs, and the early conclusion of the Doha Round with an ambitious, balanced, equitable and development-oriented outcome and early results in provisions aimed at LDCs will help generate economic growth through equitable trade. Enhanced debt relief measures, an increased flow of foreign direct investment, technology transfer and investment in building long-term productive capacity will be critically important in order to ensure resources for the financing of sustainable development in LDCs.

The United Nations will host the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul next year. The Conference must aim to have an ambitious, comprehensive, forward-looking and results-oriented outcome. As the Chair of the LDC Coordinating Bureau, I call upon the international community to make the Istanbul outcome a turning point in addressing the multidimensional challenges and constraints that LDCs face today. The success of the Conference will be measured by its contributions to making a difference in the conditions of the millions of poor in our countries.

Nepal is also a landlocked country. Therefore, our development challenges are further compounded by that reality, which increases the cost of our international trade substantially. Therefore, specific support measures to improve infrastructure and trade facilitation in line with the Almaty Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries will be critical to promoting their development needs.

I will now touch on the political situation and the ongoing peace process in my country. Nepal is passing through the arduous transition from a 10-year conflict to sustainable peace and stability with a nationally driven peace process. We have come a long way since June 2006, when the peace process started, with some ups and downs, which is only natural for a complex peace process. Yet our national determination remains strong and unwavering, and we are fully committed to bringing the ongoing peace process to a meaningful conclusion by resolving all outstanding issues.

From a longer-term perspective, Nepal has achieved some remarkable progress since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord on 21 November 2006. The promulgation of the interim constitution, the election of the Constituent Assembly and, subsequently, the declaration of Nepal as a federal democratic republic stand as notable achievements.

Today, the 601-member Constituent Assembly of Nepal, a third of whom are women, is one of the most inclusive assemblies. The Assembly comprises representation from different ethnic groups, backward regions and traditionally marginalized communities, among others.

Historic and unique as it is, Nepal's peace process is not confined only to the issue of signing the Peace Accord and the elections to the Constituent Assembly. The next important task is to write a new constitution for the newly born republic. That will consolidate the gains made over the years in establishing the people as the real source of sovereignty and State authority and in guaranteeing multiparty democracy, human rights, a federal structure and inclusive governance. Therefore, the process encompasses a much broader agenda, leading towards the historic transformation of Nepal's political, economic and social structure.

The people of Nepal nurture the hope of a better future, which they rightly deserve. Political transformation needs to be complemented by social transformation and economic prosperity. While ensuring political stability, we are making efforts to revive the economy with new and focused initiatives for the acceleration of economic activities, including through the celebration of Nepal Tourism Year in 2011. We hope that visitors will enjoy the flora and fauna of

Nepal, including tours to Lumbini in Nepal, the birthplace of Lord Buddha. To that end and to revitalize and accelerate our economy, we look forward to ambitious recovery measures with support from the international community.

Recently we have made some progress in addressing the core issues of the integration and rehabilitation of the former Maoist combatants. In that context, I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Government and the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist have agreed to complete the process within four months, under the monitoring and supervision of the Special Committee, formed on the basis of national consensus, as per the Constitution.

We anticipate accomplishing the outstanding basic tasks in the peace process within the coming four months, with the positive contributions of national stakeholders and the goodwill and support of the international community. Earlier this year, we also achieved remarkable success, with the help of the United Nations, in releasing the disqualified minors living in cantonments, based on the action plan signed on 16 December 2009.

The United Nations Mission in Nepal has been involved in support of Nepal's nationally driven peace process. We express our appreciation to the United Nations for its consistent support of our peace process.

Nepal's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter is total and unflinching. For us, the United Nations is the best expression of multilateralism. It has served the international community in the past and continues to work as a linchpin of international relationships today. We have no doubt as to its indispensability.

However, it needs to do more in this globalized world. Global problems require global solutions. That is possible only through multilateralism, based on inclusiveness and equity. We look for an enhanced and coherent role of the United Nations in dealing with all global issues, but in particular those that affect the lives and livelihoods of the poor around the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kalombo Mwansa, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Mwansa (Zambia): I stand before this Assembly as an envoy of His Excellency Mr. Rupiah Bwezani Banda, President of the Republic of Zambia.

Zambia wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency Ngwazi Professor Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi and current Chairperson of the African Union.

This session is taking place amid global challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation, international terrorism, piracy, HIV/AIDS, extreme poverty and hunger, among others. It is an occasion for all Member States to collectively engage in dialogue aimed at finding solutions to the challenges that our countries are facing, in order to contribute to the socio-economic development and well-being of our people.

The Assembly's theme this year is appropriate, as it provides an opportunity to reaffirm the central role of the United Nations in global governance. The role of the United Nations is felt in areas such as peacekeeping, security, human rights, the promotion of gender equality and the fight for social justice and equality. However, emerging global challenges, such as the recent financial and economic crisis, also call for a greater role for the United Nations in global economic governance. In that regard, our Government would like to see a strengthening and enhancing of capacity in the United Nations to enable it to deal with some of those challenges.

Allow me to express Zambia's gratitude to the Secretary-General for organizing the important high-level meetings that preceded the general debate.

The summit to review the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided an opportunity for the international community to take stock of existing gaps and the challenges faced in the attainment of the MDGs. At that meeting I elaborated on the progress Zambia has made and the challenges we continue to face in our efforts to attain the MDGs. In spite of the strides made in improving the macroeconomic environment and putting in place development frameworks, the incidence of poverty in my country remains high, partly because our efforts alone are not enough. I therefore wish to reiterate calls to the international cooperating partners to honour all of their commitments to ensure that the 2015 targets are realized.

Let me also add that the measures that the Zambian Government has adopted to address the issue of hunger and poverty include devising agricultural sector policies that enable smallholder farming

households to improve their productivity. In that connection, this year Zambia has recorded a bumper harvest of maize, which is our main food crop. That will ensure food security and increased incomes for smallholder farmers, who constitute the majority of the farming community.

We are mindful, however, of the fact that climate change, as evidenced by persistent periods of droughts and floods in our countries, poses one of the most serious threats to the agricultural sector and thus to overall food production. While as a Government we are doing everything possible, such as investing in agricultural research and irrigation methods, the debate on climate change should not lose sight of the need to assist developing countries, including Zambia, in building capacities to adapt in order to mitigate negative impacts on the agricultural sector. Without those, poverty and hunger will persist in my country.

Zambia shares the concerns of the Secretary-General regarding current global resource loss and ecosystem degradation. It is important that mankind reverse the ongoing trends of natural resource loss and ecosystem degradation as a commitment to protect biodiversity. That will be achieved only if all stakeholders step up their efforts and meet the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals.

My delegation welcomes the positive developments that have occurred in the past year in the area of arms control and disarmament. The Security Council's convening of a summit to address disarmament issues, the Secretary-General's launch of a five-point nuclear disarmament proposal, the entry into force of treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Central Asia and Africa, and the convening of a summit in Washington to discuss nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, among others, must indeed be commended. We hope those efforts and the momentum generated will be sustained and will lead to the resolution of all outstanding issues in the area of disarmament.

Zambia, however, continues to face difficulties in controlling the inflow of small arms and light weapons. The illicit trade in small arms threatens security and retards social and economic development in our country. Zambia therefore calls for the establishment of a strong and legally binding international instrument on the arms trade. We strongly support the convening of the United Nations conference in 2012 to establish legally binding common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, with specific measures against defaulters.

On the reform of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, Zambia reaffirms its support for the African position, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, that Africa should be granted, among others, not less than two permanent seats, with all of the prerogatives and privileges including the right of veto, and two additional non-permanent seats. Africa is the only continent without permanent seats, and yet it has the second largest membership of the United Nations. Granting Africa permanent seats will redress that historical injustice.

The Government of Zambia recognizes the important role that women play in attaining development. Furthermore, we recognize that the empowerment of women and their inclusion in the decision-making process have enhanced their role in development. That is why Zambia has integrated women of all sectors of society in decision-making positions, and we are committed to doing even more.

Our Government welcomes the establishment of UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the appointment of Ms. Michelle Bachelet, the former President of Chile, to head it. It is our hope that the new Entity will have a strong and effective presence at country level and will help Member States implement standards and will provide them with the much-needed financial and technical support required to achieve women's empowerment, equality and equity.

As the Assembly is aware, Zambia has been hosting refugees prior to and since its independence in 1964 and is party to all refugee conventions. My country was among the first on the African continent to host a refugee camp. Zambia is committed to hosting refugees, and our experience has demonstrated that voluntary repatriation is a desirable and durable solution. However, as an under-resourced and least developed country, hosting refugees is a major challenge for us. We therefore call upon the international community to provide financial assistance to enable us to discharge that responsibility through the provision of minimum standards of care.

In addition to the question of refugees, the issue of internally displaced persons, which has continued to increase worldwide, especially in Africa, equally calls

for our attention. The adoption by the African Union last year of the Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa is an important landmark that requires the support of the international community at large.

The sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe continue to cause great suffering to the people of that country and to the southern Africa region as a whole. Similarly, the embargo that the United States has imposed on Cuba, which the United Nations has condemned through numerous General Assembly resolutions, has caused untold hardship to the people of Cuba. Zambia calls on this body to ensure that the sanctions on Zimbabwe and the United States embargo on Cuba are lifted.

In an effort to consolidate democratic governance, Zambia is in the process of enacting a new constitution. The National Constitutional Conference that was established to oversee the process concluded its work and submitted a draft constitution, which awaits tabling before Parliament. As the Assembly may be aware, Zambia will hold presidential and general elections in 2011. As in the past, international election observers, including those from the United Nations, will be invited.

As we reaffirm the role of the United Nations in global governance, let us not be complacent in the face of great suffering and hardship in our world. Let that be the force that drives us to action, where all nations will work together in meeting the goals and aspirations of our peoples.

The meeting rose at 9 p.m.